BOOK THREE

The Film Festival
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1 Three Silent Film Faces

'Yes, it's the Film Festival, tonight,' thought Lawrence to himself, before getting up off his favourite chair.

In the middle of his modern apartment, he paused for a second. Then he walked towards the living room window. For a few moments his Silent Face stared out into the dark lonely night through the bay window and, as his eyes focused here and there, he seemed to connect with the world out there by just looking at all the street lights along the horizon line. It may have been bleak midwinter, but the dark lonely night could not take away the wonderful feeling he had inside himself. As he stared, he marvelled about the time he was living in: 'There is no doubt about it, to be young and alive in the 21st century is a wonderful thing.'

Lawrence turned away from the dark night and, after he had glanced down onto the table at the book he had been reading, he walked out of the living room and into the hallway. In the hallway, he picked up a small mobile red telephone, and phoned his Silent Face friend, Brian. After chatting about some of the things, that were happening in and around the Silent scene at the moment, a time of seven o'clock was fixed for them to meet.

Directly after this Lawrence telephoned his other friend Hugh Jones. Hugh Jones worked during the day in a large city centre office in Glasgow, in telesales. Although he liked his job,

everyone in the Silent scene knew that Hugh's heart lay in old-fashioned movies. He wanted to be an old-fashioned film director. Hugh knew everything about movies. In fact he could tell you everything and anything about trolleymen, dollymen, actresses and actors. He has read just about every biography on every film director, who had worked in the old-fashioned industry of film. And he was quite an authority on the old silent era of black and white movies too. The golden era of Hollywood, however, was his specialised subject.

Hugh, is kept up-to-date with what is going on in and around the modern entertainment complexes by an underground magazine called Daze. Sadly there was little chance of him actually becoming a film director in the modern world, for films are not taken seriously in the twenty-first century. The film industry in the twenty-first century is very small and unimportant. Very few films are made in the modern era. For some reason movies do not dazzle people anymore like they used to. However, having said that, it must be stated here that the Film Festival, that celebrates the old medium every year, is always busy.

Hugh Jones responded down the phone in a polished theatre voice, 'Yes, delighted, my friend, I will meet you in the foyer of the entertainment centre about half-past six,' and after a sigh he declared, 'You know, Lawrence, it is going to be a good Film Festival this year; I can feel it in my bones.'

Lawrence agreed with him and nodded to himself. Then he remembered last year's event, and he replied, 'I wonder if we will come across any new weird and wonderful cults at this year's Film Festival.'

You must understand in the Silent scene people tend to form themselves into fashion movements, and follow this or that conviction that identifies them with life.

Hugh, in his natural sarcastic voice, laughed; then after an extended pause he changed the subject. He said, as if hitting the back row, 'Is that drunken bum Brian, going to be there tonight?'

'He certainly is,' said Lawrence trying not to cackle down the phone.

You see it has been reported recently, in the Silent scene, that every night of the week Brian has been out drinking and making a fool of himself. Some Silent Faces reckon that he has gone off his head.

Hugh Jones, whenever he can, loves to tease Brian as regards his intake of alcohol. Hugh, when he meets Brian at the weekend, usually says to him in a superior tone, 'How much are you drinking these days, then?' and before Brian can answer, he laughs at him and declares, 'Oh, five pints of lager and you're anyone's.'

Like I say many people in the Silent scene feel that Brian has gone off his head, they say that when some Silent Faces are speaking to him, Brian nods back at them, and his Silent Face takes on a mad look. In fact, just last week he shaved all his hair off, and he now looks like someone out of the Foreign Legion.

Lawrence, after he had put the phone down, thought about Brian and how he had changed. Then he dressed himself for the Film Festival. He put on a silver suit, and over the top of it he put on his biblical robe. The robe, he knew, would signify that he was part of the Silent scene in the 21st Century; the modern-day garment, made of a fine material, he knew would change colour to suit the atmosphere, or the surroundings, wherever he was.

After brushing his short black hair into the new style, Lawrence walked outside and headed for the magnetic train station called Millerston. The station lay in the heart of the country and was about nine miles from the city centre. It only took him a few minutes to walk from his house to the station. And as he walked along through the dark night his Silent Face looked up at Canis Minor, the little Dog star, then he gazed up at the full china white moon, at that moment passing through Gemini. Lawrence wondered as he glanced over towards the constellation of Gemini about the birth of creation. He said to himself: 'How come stars never get old - billion's of them up there, and every night they look brand new,' then as he looked up at the heavens again he remembered a passage from the Bible:

Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.
Job (9:9)

When Lawrence arrived at the small station, he immediately read the words up on the neon notice board: Everything in the modern world is easy when you travel by Magnetic Train. Then some more information followed: The next train to Central will arrive in 4 Mins 22 seconds.

Lawrence, as the magnetic train glided a few millimetres above the electromagnetic force field towards the city, looked out of the window. As he sat there he wondered about all the people out there travelling here and there in such a cold bright winter's night, 'I wonder how many of them are going to the Film Festival?' he uttered to himself.

Suddenly, a bridge appeared, then water flashed by him. Then once again he thought about the world outside his window and all the wonderful people in it: 'People just like me, I guess, going to meet their friends and acquaintances: Silent Faces on the go again, looking for love, looking for adventure.'

Lawrence smiled at the dark world through the frosty train window, until a familiar Silent Face reflection stared back at him. Suddenly, a magnetic train zoomed by, heading towards the city, and for some reason Lawrence looked for some of his Silent Face friends inside the long cylinder object - but he did not see any of them. In a split second the magnetic train disappeared, then the lights from the city sparkled again.

Knowing that his friends were somewhere out there on the tracks, heading towards the city Lawrence marvelled to himself, 'I wonder what will happen to us tonight at the Film Festival? Will Brian, my Silent Face friend, get drunk? Will he have to be put to bed again? Will he turn up sober? Will Hugh go on and on about all those old films that he has seen? Will Hugh go on and on about all those old films he has never seen? Will the great film-lover from the Silent scene drag us all over the place just to see one of his favourite movies? Will we be up all night sitting in some small cafe bar talking about movies till the early hours of the morning?'

At 7.30 that night, Lawrence walked into the foyer of the main entertainment complex in the city centre and, as soon as he stepped onto the thick dark blue industrial carpet, he glanced over the crowd of heads and searched for his friends.

He could see that people from all walks of life had already arrived for the Festival; they were now standing here and there chatting to each other. Lawrence's Silent Face looked around to see if he could see his friends, but they hadn't arrived yet. To kill time he read all the names of all the films on at this year's Film Festival up above the kiosks. He thought the funniest film title by far was: Far-out Females from Scandinavia, 'Now that sounds interesting,' he thought to himself.

Once a year all the entertainment centres in town transform themselves into old-fashioned cinemas for the Film Festival. The Festival is supposed to give the people of the new era an insight into what it must have been like when movies were all the rage. Many Silent Faces in the new era to this day are still baffled as to why a sequence of moving objects on a screen had at one time entertained the masses.

Lawrence noticed that the foyer of the main entertainment centre had a childlike feel to it. His Silent Face gazed at the endless rows of coloured sweets inside the glass counters that were situated all over the foyer. Then he stared at all the funny people in the white uniforms standing behind them, and all the funny faces just about to buy something from them. He noticed how that after they had bought something the curious figures would move quickly towards the exit signs, hurrying along to see a film. In fact, everything in a strange way seemed so unreal to him: the warm and cold ice cream stalls, the steaming hot-dog stands, the white popcorn. It was like a giant Christmas party, for everywhere he looked, he could see old-fashioned video films for sale in colourful boxes.

Lawrence smiled to himself when he noticed a young lad's eyes, big and bright, staring up at a small screen above him. The small screen was advertising a strange space adventure film: *Flash Gordon*. He could see that everyone was having the time of their

lives. The innocent film images somehow brought back the memory of the first time he had been to the movies. The first time Lawrence had been to see a film was with his father when he was just a lad. Lawrence thought to himself: 'It's funny how kind images always take you back to childhood.' And as he stared at the people around him his mind tried to remember what was the first film he had been to see, 'Oh yes, that's right, the fabulous *Lawrence of Arabia*.'

There were posters up everywhere in the complex telling you what films were showing at this year's Festival, and the feeling that real-life had somehow connected with celluloid in the past came and went inside a young silent mind, as he stared at them. Lawrence looked here and there at the idols, heroes and heroines up on the walls, and to pass the time he tried to imagine the difference between the representation, and the real human portraying it. Suddenly, the wonder of it all hit him: 'When we go to the cinema we go inside, sit down, the lights dim, and as the images move slowly in and out, up and down, we stare at the screen, and somehow the illusion takes us away to another world. And soon we become part of that other world. The fun I guess starts when we try to balance fiction with fact, reality with art. Oh, those old film directors must have had a good time,' he thought to himself, as he laughed out loud.

Every year at the Film Festival there are hundreds of film titles on show - films on just about everything: thrillers, killers, adventure stories, love, life, sex, and death - you name it they have got it. Just then a Silent Face man, who was with his wife and family, smiled at Lawrence before going into Cinema 6 to see a film titled: *Chainsaw Massacre*. Then in no time at all they all came back out again and went into Cinema 7 to see a film titled: *City Lights*.

'Yes, it's so easy to end up in the wrong theatre watching the wrong film at the Film Festival,' thought Lawrence to himself, as he watched the people around him.

It is true to say at this time of the year a large majority of people go into town and watch at least one film. The price of the

ticket is reduced; sometimes they are half price, and sometimes they are free. The main complex in the city centre puts on hundreds of movies for the Film Festival. In the 21st century there are so many different scenes going on - the Silent scene is only one of many - and people from all walks of life make up their own scenes and have fun. And when it comes to the Film Festival some people like to dress up as old-fashioned movie stars, and go out and celebrate the old antiquated medium once again.

After looking at some of the fancy dress costumes on show inside the theatre, Lawrence noticed Hugh Jones's bald head and small fat body wander into the foyer of the film complex. Hugh seemed to waddle as he walked, and the other strange thing about him was that he always seemed to be under pressure, as if something bad was going to happen to him.

Lawrence, who was standing just in front of the ice-cream stall, waved over to him. Then he quickly walked through the crowd and greeted his Silent Face friend. He said in a loud voice as he grabbed his hand, 'Hugh, great to see you. How are you?'

Hugh, as if he had just fought his way through a dark and dangerous world to get to the Film Festival, said in a depressed tone, 'Not bad,' then he looked at Lawrence as if an evil omen hung over them both. 'It's a wonder I got here on time. Have you seen the crowds of people out there?' and to indicate where they all were, he pointed his thumb over his shoulder, and cried, 'The streets are packed with Film Festival people!'

Lawrence knew him to well to be bothered by his antics. He just glanced up at the flashing information screens inside the foyer. Then he said to Hugh, 'Well, now that you are here, you must be looking forward to the Film Festival.'

Hugh stared at Lawrence's Silent Face for a moment, then he looked here and there until his eye caught sight of a timeless face on a film poster, next to the glass counter that sold ice cream. Suddenly he looked up and illuminated his thoughts in a dull tone, 'Where is he?'

Brian at this point was still in his house. His mother had just telephoned a taxi to rush him to the entertainment centre, and she reckoned he would probably be there in about 15 minutes.

Lawrence wondered why the crazy smell of popcorn in the foyer signified the return of an old culture; for the strange smell seemed to take him right back in time. Cracking a joke, he said to Hugh: 'Do you think the glory days of film, full of glossy images, catch phrases and screen idols, will ever come back into vogue again in the 21st century and overpower society?'

Hugh did not say anything and as they both stared up at the advertisements, and the old film star faces above the kiosks, Lawrence started to think about the weird group in the Silent scene who go by the name of the Spoonies. The Spoonies they say in the Silent scene are lovesick people who fall in love with anything and everything. Lawrence, as he connected with the image on the poster above him, said casually: 'There's bound to be a lot of lovesick filmgoers out tonight - don't you think.'

Hugh did not say anything; he was still annoyed because Brian was late. Hugh looked at his watch a few times, then he snapped, 'Where is he!'

Lawrence to keep his Silent Face friend from exploding into one of his well known rages kept on talking about films, 'So long as you don't believe in all that counterfeit rubbish: killers, crazy people, maniacs and madmen, you may very well come out of the Film Festival sane - what do you think, Hugh?'

Still Hugh did not answer and as they negotiated their way through the Film Festival crowd inside the foyer of the main complex, Lawrence stared at him.

The Film Festival always starts first thing in the morning and goes on right through the night to the next day. All the entertainment centres in the city celebrate the Film Festival, and so do all the bars. In fact, some of the bars show movies non-stop from morning till night. The publicans being fond of a coin or two try and cash in because of the popularity of the event. Sometimes they align themselves to a certain era of filmmaking, or a certain genre. The bars and restaurants in the city can apply for an all

night drinking licence, and some of the customers dress up at the Festival and go along as old-fashioned movie stars. The people who dress up for the Film Festival try, like everyone else, to imagine what it must have been like during the old era when the dominant art form was moving pictures.

Lawrence had heard about a bar, situated right opposite the main entertainment complex, that really went in for the Film Festival. He mentioned it to Hugh, 'I can't remember the name of the place - but I know it sells cheap beer all through the Film Festival. Do you think we should go there after we have been to see a film?'

Hugh, still in a bad mood, nodded, and just at that moment a familiar Silent Face came through the film crowd. 'Sorry I'm late guys,' said Brian in a daft voice.

Hugh right away had a go at him. He said in a loud sarcastic tone, so that everyone in the foyer could hear him, 'Where have you been? Have you been catching up on some lost sleep, then?'

Lawrence knew Hugh would be the one to pick the movie, so after a discussion, as regards what has being going on in the Silent scene recently, he said to Hugh, 'Well, Hugh, you are the movie expert. What do you think is the best film on at the Festival this year?'

Hugh took out from under his robe the official Film Festival programme. Lawrence could see that the programme had all the information in it about the Film Festival. Hugh like a sophisticated elderly gentleman opened the programme slowly, then he looked up at a poster on the wall, and stared at it for a few moments. Finally he said in a low voice: 'Killer on the Midnight Train, looks like the best film to me,' and as he casually put the programme back into his suit pocket under his robe, he added: 'Killer on the Midnight Train is a film about a man who has kidnapped another man's wife. The distraught husband chases after them vowing to kill the man. The hero follows them through Europe. Eventually, he comes across them on a train bound for Prague, but for some reason no one can get off the train - a good old-fashioned murder mystery, if ever there was one.'

‘Sounds all right to me,’ said a daft looking Silent Face, who had just arrived.

Lawrence nodded, ‘Yea, why not.’

Brian danced his head from side to side as if listening to some music. Then he added casually, ‘Fancy a drink, somewhere in the complex, before we go and see a movie?’

Hugh, after he had looked up at the information board above the cashier, checked his watch. Then, as if trying to catch a train before it left the station, he said in a loud dramatic voice, ‘Right we have got five minutes - come on let’s have a drink at that bar just over there. Then we will go and see the movie: Killer on the Midnight Train.’

Lawrence had been to the main Film Centre many times; he knew the little bar just before the check in point, where they scanned your ticket, on the right-hand side of the complex. The owner of the bar he knew collected film memorabilia, and sometimes at this time of year he put on a film exhibition all of his own. The owner of the bar had given the name: The Thirty-Nine Steps, to his bar. The establishment had photographs of film stars all over its walls, framed around old-fashioned black and white filmstrips.

Once inside the Thirty-Nine Steps Bar, Hugh looked over at the small screen that was transmitting live pictures from Cinema three, and he like everyone else listened to the voice coming out of the small speakers at the side of the bar: ‘You shouldn’t have done it...’ then someone fired a shot, and everyone inside the small screen ran for cover.

The young slim blonde barmaid, at that moment looked up at the screen, and as she cleaned a glass she smiled to herself as if she understood the relationship between the spectator, the film hero, and the new culture of the 21st century. She then looked away towards the far end of the bar and stared at the little neon light that flashed a dollar sign below the words, The Thirty-Nine Steps, and she watched it for a while. Suddenly, all the lights ran up to the ceiling and made a fancy stairway. Then the lights went out again. Presently, the words The Thirty-Nine Steps flashed a

few times, and then all the white lines ran up to the top of the ceiling again.

Hugh remembered something about the director who made the film, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. He turned to Lawrence and said to him in an authoritative voice, 'He appeared in all his films, you know.'

Brian smiled and to annoy Hugh, because he always said, 'You know,' he responded in a plain voice, 'Who did?'

'The director did!' cried Hugh.

The Thirty-Nine Steps Bar had a large wooden floor area in front of the bar, and the restaurant lay over to the right-hand side of the bar. The tables and chairs inside the restaurant seemed to meander around a raised platform. Three couples were eating food there, and were all staring up at one of the screens on the wall. The transmission, by this time, had stopped from Cinema 3, and a trailer was advertising some of the films that were on at the Film Festival this year: 'Cinema Five has a romantic comedy on starring, Jeff Burton, Cecilia Lang, and that great actress Barbara Hawthorn - not to be missed film-lovers...'

A mixture of the latest technology, along with primeval ironwork, seemed to establish the fashion of the time inside The Thirty Nine Steps Bar. This modern hotchpotch style is sometimes called newfangled art in the Silent scene, by the ones who make up names. Lawrence looked back towards the entrance, and he admired the replica sculpture of the winged victory of Samathrace, and the statue of Charlie Chaplin, standing opposite each other just outside the doorway.

Brian looked at the young slim blonde barmaid, dressed in a black fancy sequence top, behind the Thirty-Nine Steps Bar. Then he said slowly, as he gazed at her, 'Three bottles of beer, please.'

His Silent Face stared at her for a time, and when she repeated the order back to him, he smiled and said something to her about Charlie Chaplin being a friend of his.

When the young slim blonde waitress returned with the drinks, she glanced at Brian and got a little embarrassed. She said

quickly, 'Right, three bottles of beer,' then she looked at Lawrence, and then at Hugh, as if to say: 'Who's your friend?'

The waitress, as she opened the bottles of beer, acted as if she knew all about Brian's shenanigans. Hugh, after a few moments, thought he had better say something to her about his Silent Face friend. In a sarcastic tone, he said, 'My friend has been on a bender for the last year, you know.' Then as he looked at the many different coloured bottles of whisky that ran all the way along the top of the gantry, he added, 'I would watch him if I were you - he is constantly on heat.'

The young slim blonde waitress stared at Hugh and when he moved his eyebrows up and down to colour the story, she laughed. Brian looked at her again and mumbled something to himself about blondes being oversexed, overeducated, and overpowering.

Lawrence picked up his bottle of beer and as everyone laughed, he looked into the huge mirror in the middle of the gantry behind the Thirty-Nine Steps Bar. His Silent Face, just then, noticed a few more people walk into the bar. One of them just happened to be the young slim blonde barmaid's boyfriend. They appeared to Lawrence as Roughnecks. Roughnecks in the Silent scene are men who act tough; they tend to be young, unattractive, and quick-tempered individuals. They can sometimes be violent and they are worth avoiding.

Brian, still mad about the young sexy blonde barmaid, leaned on the bar. He started nodding his head from side to side to the music playing inside the Thirty-Nine Steps Bar. Then he said in a natural tone, 'I don't know why it is, but I have this fantastic libido. I don't know where it comes from...'

Hugh looked at him, pulled a face, scratched his bald head, then as he heehawed at Brian he made up an excuse for his Silent Face friend. Hugh said, as if addressing the whole bar, 'He has never been the same, you know, since he met that famous French actress on holiday.'

The young barmaid laughed; however, Brian did not notice anything wrong. He paid for the three bottles of beer, then he

looked around the sumptuous bar and nodded again as if to say: 'Yes, it's true.'

After dancing his head from side to side again, Brian casually walked over to the toilet whistling the daft theme tune from the film that was playing inside the Thirty-Nine Steps Bar.

The boyfriend's mate, for some reason at that moment, started telling the young blonde barmaid all about the erotic murder movie that they had just been to see at the Film Festival: 'You should have seen the blood - it was pouring out of his guts!' he ejaculated, before thumping the top of the Thirty-Nine Steps Bar, 'He did not know that she had a knife and she was just about to stick it into his...'

However, the boyfriend of the young blonde barmaid did not hear a word. He followed Brian into the toilet, and once there the tall well-built young man pulled him up. 'Hey you, Silent Face, what are you up to chatting up the girl behind the Thirty-Nine Steps Bar, eh!'

Brian, standing at the urinal, turned and looked at the stranger, and for a moment he just stared at his thick grey face, rugged and spotty. Then, as if he knew him, Brian turned away and said in an innocent and friendly voice, 'Yea, she is something else isn't she, just give me a couple of minutes, mate, and I'll get her phone number...'

Back at the bar Lawrence sensed the scene from the young slim blonde barmaid's eyes and, as he hurried towards the toilet, he heard her say: 'I'm trying to get him to give up his job on the building site; for when he takes me out, you know, he's always in such a bad mood...'

On hearing this, Hugh followed Lawrence into the Gents at the Thirty-Nine Steps Bar, and after a second or two so did the two men who had come in with the young blonde barmaid's boyfriend. Brian by this time had been hit, and he was now dancing about all over the place; a trickle of blood poured from his nose.

‘Right come on, break it up!’ shouted Lawrence, as he got in between them, ‘We all want to enjoy the Film Festival!’ and thankfully things calmed down after this.

Brian like a zombie walked over to the large mirror inside the toilet, and took the opportunity to inspect his nose in the mirror. The two friends of the man, who worked on the building site, tried to calm their friend down. One man, in a modern smart black suit, looked at Brian and, after observing the blood coming down his nose, he said to his mate, ‘I’m sure he didn’t mean it,’ then they both laughed.

Lawrence, seeing them preoccupied, ushered his Silent Face friend out of the toilet and back into the Thirty-Nine Steps Bar, then into the corridor of the Film complex. There the two Silent Face men stood for a moment under the neon sign that read: Welcome to the Film Festival, and they stared at each other.

Some of the dark faces of the filmgoers, going along to see the film, Killer on the Midnight Train, looked over at the Silent Face man holding his bloody nose. Suddenly, Brian’s face was lit up by a flash of light coming from the neon sign outside the Thirty-Nine Steps Bar.

One man walking by said in a light-hearted tone: ‘Is that special effects, Silent Face, or are you an advertisement for the film: Killer on the Midnight Train,’ and the dark shadows beside him laughed.

Hugh suddenly appeared, and his angry face stared at Brian for a few seconds. Then he said in a fearful voice, ‘Come on, for God’s sake, let’s get out of here. Let’s get into the picture hall before our friend from the building site comes back and tries to murder someone!’

Hugh Jones grabbed Brian by the arm, and pulled him up the dark corridor in the direction of Cinema Five, ‘Come on!’ he shouted at him.

Lawrence thought the scene funny and, halfway down the pitch-black corridor towards Cinema Five, he heard a familiar voice beside him moan, ‘Oh my nose; I think it is broken!’

‘If you want to be a tough guy why not become a boxer,’ cried Hugh Jones, as he pulled Brian by the arm again, along the dark corridor, ‘Come on, hurry up!’

The theatre showing the movie, Killer on the Midnight Train, seated about 200 people. It was a small compact theatre compared to the others in the complex and, as the three Silent Film Faces approached the cinema, someone behind the polished wooden doors screamed, ‘Ahaaaaa,’ and space-age music played. After another scream more dialogue followed: ‘Come back!’ then a man’s voice cried: ‘You will never get away with it - I’ll find you even if I have to travel across the Sahara desert,’ and an old-fashioned foghorn blew, as if a ship was about to leave the harbour.

Even though Cinema Five was smaller in comparison to the others Lawrence thought the scream sounded just as loud and just as dramatic as if it had come from one of the bigger cinema screens in the complex.

A woman assistant, who had the job of showing people in and out of the theatre, just at that moment came out from a side room. As she locked the office door she too heard the noise coming from the screen, but it did not seem to bother her; however the babble coming down the dark passageway did. After she had locked the office door she stopped for a moment and looked up the dark corridor. Hearing footsteps coming towards her she shown her torch up the middle of the black corridor and found a Silent Face man there. Lawrence smiled at her. Then seeing two other Silent Faces beside him she put down her Film Festival programme on top of a chair by the door, and before looking up again she sighed, ‘Oh, I always like to see Silent Faces at the Film Festival, for they are always so well behaved,’ and then she went to meet them.

The woman smiled when the three figures approached her. However, when she saw Brian holding his bloody nose her tone changed. She said slowly, ‘What’s been happening to you, then! Are you all right, son?’

Brian, as if trying to transfer the fight scene from the Thirty-Nine Steps Bar, smiled at her. The woman assistant said in a prominent voice, 'No trouble now, you hear, or else your out on you ear.'

His Silent Face looked at her, and he nodded, then he got all confused, 'No, no, no. I mean, yes, yes, yes.'

The door to Cinema Five opened just then, and a tall dark stranger walked out and straight into the Silent Face man with the bloody nose. A shot fired on the screen and someone shouted, 'Lookout!'

'Watch where you're going Silent Face!' said the tall dark stranger dressed in a long dark coat.

Brian said apologetically, 'Sorry.'

Hugh Jones looked at the usherette and shook his head slowly and, as the tall dark stranger walked away, Hugh turned to the usherette and cracked a joke, 'He will never make a good actor - will he.'

'Who?' said the usherette baffled.

A beam of light shone in Brian's face again, and then a voice said softly, 'Are you sure you are all right, Silent Face. I'd better show you to your seat. And as she opened the door, the usherette muttered to herself, 'I think there are a few vacant seats near the back of the cinema.'

When the usherette looked up at the screen she saw a man with a gun in a soft grey hat, and for a moment she listened to the dialogue. The beautiful actress scornfully said: 'You can't get away with it! Life has a way of catching up with people like you,' and as the actress lit a cigarette a shot rang out.

Brian looked up at the screen, then he muttered to Hugh, 'I was only complimenting the young blonde barmaid's appearance, and the next thing I know a Roughneck appears on the scene and digs me up - I mean how was I to know...'

Someone near the back of the picture hall cried out in a suppressed tone, 'Quiet, Silent Face!'

Not all that faraway, in fact just about four rows down inside the picture hall, the usherette turned round and before looking

back up at the screen she shown the torch into Brian's big daft face again. Then she whispered to him in a low angry voice, 'Keep the noise down, Silent Face.'

Hugh Jones was quite surprised when he saw the blood coming down Brian's nose. He looked at the usherette, and to keep on her right side he cracked a joke. He whispered to her, 'The problem is that he thinks he is like that chap up there on the big screen, and all the woman are in love with him.'

A bright light flashed from the silver screen and as Lawrence gazed away from it he looked at the usherette and noticed for the first time a middle-aged woman worn away with time. Then her face disappeared as the theatre went completely black again. After a few seconds the screen flashed, and the actor said, 'No one will ever find me...'

A beam of light found three seats near the back of the stalls, and a kind voice said, 'Enjoy the film, Silent Faces,' then the beam of light turned around and danced up the aisle towards the entrance. The first film finished, and before the main film came on, some adverts appeared. On the big screen a huge black hairy head bent forward, and kissed someone, then the hairy head moved back again. A woman on the screen appeared, she closed her eyes and fell into a lazy dream. Then she lay down on top of a red satin sheet and waited to be kissed again. The actress's voice came through all the speakers inside the small picture hall. She said in a sexy tone, 'I knew you would come and see me tonight...'

A Roughneck, over on the right-hand side of the cinema, created a wonderful wolf-whistle as the gorgeous girl on the screen started to get undressed. This time a learned voice croaked through all the speakers in the picture hall, 'Mansart the only aftershave for real men,' and as the actor dripped the aftershave onto the palm of his hand the actress turned round and unclasped her black bra. The actor looked at her as if he wanted to kill her. Then they got into bed. The learned voice whose face could not be seen croaked again: 'No one can resist Mansart.'

The Roughnecks down at the front started shouting and whooping, and a man not all that far from where Lawrence was

sitting said to his mate, 'Who would be an actor, eh!' and nudged him.

His mate replied in a cheeky common voice, 'I wish I were in his shoes!' then someone turned round and told him, 'He's not wearing any!' and everyone laughed.

Not long after this a deep red curtain was pulled across the screen, signalling the end of the transmission, and all the lights came on. When the lights went out again, a few moments later, a few Screen Zealots started clapping as the title came up: Killer on the Midnight Train.

They say in the Silent scene the Screen Zealots watch everything and anything from the old world, and that nothing goes by their fanatical eyes; and although TV is only watched for news and educational programmes in the 21st century, it is a well known fact that the Screen Zealots would like to go back to the old culture of the 20th century.

Lawrence looked over at them, then he said to Hugh, 'Goodness knows how they spend their time in the modern world. In fact, I have heard it said that the Screen Zealots only get together these days to watch old-fashioned movies. And when they go for a drink they stare at each other. No wonder they walk around the town like zombies. When it's raining you sometimes see them around the scene heading for the old-fashioned picture halls, they are easily spotted. When a Screen Zealot puts up his umbrella the Zealot stares at the flat screen inside it, as if the person in the movie is telling them where to go. Everyone laughs at them.'

'It is well known that the Screen Zealots are paranoid about meeting other people from other movements in the 21st century. Sometimes they get an attack of real-life and run away from you. But the men and women who worship the screen are so funny, don't you think. I know they are different from the people of the Shining Glass Experience: for the latter worship everything and anything on a screen: adverts, presenters, even domestic products. As you know The Screen Zealots, however, only like films. They discuss the film from every point of view: where the idea of the film comes from, how one image glides into another, how

movements in film correspond to movements in life, and how the eye follows the action and makes up its own mind: in short what constitutes a good film. And I know they can tell you everything and anything about this or that piece of film all the way back to the original silent films of the 1920's.'

'When a Screen Zealot sees a screen - it doesn't matter where it is - he stares at it as if it were his master, "We love you film, you are our conqueror, we live our lives for you: for only you are true," is what they love to say to you when they meet you on the street, "Oh you should have seen the film I saw last night. It was wonderful. It was so original," and then they stare at you as if you are unreal.'

Hugh had more sympathy than Lawrence as regards the people who worship films, and he just nodded and said, 'Yes.' It is true to say that to be an original Silent Face is just the same as being an individual Screen Zealot: for the people of the 21st Century know that originality has never been conquered by any dominant ruling culture in the history of the world.

Thankfully, the film, Killer on the Midnight Train, got underway and the Screen Zealots along with everyone else stared at the screen.

A handsome man in a smart suit opened an old-fashioned train door, and asked the guard to take his bag. Then he pushed the woman he was with inside. Out of focus an old blind man wandered along the platform behind them. The handsome man cracked a joke about murdering someone if the train didn't leave on time, 'You think I'm kidding, he snarled at the guard.'

The guard, standing not far away, looked at his watch and laughed,

'Should be off soon, sir.'

Brian's Silent Face turned to Lawrence, and he said, 'I hope it's not me he is going to murder.'

Someone on the train said something about having to catch a plane at the other end of the country. Brian, not waiting to see what happened next, asked Lawrence, 'Where is the train going?'

A Screen Zealot two rows down turned round and said in a loud voice, 'Keep quiet, Silent Face!' then he warned Brian: 'If you don't I'll get you thrown out.'

Brian shouted back, 'Shut up, Screen Zealot, and watch the movie - you square eyed numskull!'

A few people in the cinema turned round, as the old-fashioned diesel train pulled away from the station. The woman, who had boarded the train with the man, put her handbag down on the seat next to the window, and she took off her jacket slowly. Her white shirt was unbuttoned at the neck. Hardly thinking about it, she used the window as a mirror to put on her red lipstick. The woman stared at her face for a few moments until a man appeared in the reflection behind her.

He said coldly, 'He'll never find us!'

The old-fashioned train thundered along the tracks, as the man in the movie gazed at the beautiful face of the woman. Lawrence at that moment wondered about fiction and reality, and for some reason he thought about all the different people in the modern world of the twenty-first century, who follow a cult, or a craze. Then he thought about all the people who must have been around when this old-fashioned diesel train thundered up and down the country in the last century.

Sitting right in front of the three Silent Faces, inside Cinema Five were three Dodoes. Dodoes in the Silent scene are never happy. They seem to go through life half-dead. They moan, and complain about everything and anything. Lawrence knew they were Dodoes: for he heard one of them lament in a languid voice: 'I feel dead tired; I wonder what's wrong with me.' Then another Dodo said, 'This film is rubbish, boring, going nowhere. I'm fed up.'

His Dodo friend agreed, and he said listlessly, 'Yea, it must be the weather, or something in the air,' and, as he stared up at the ceiling, at the huge circles that looked like space ships, he appended, 'Look at the air in here, it is polluted; it is so unclean. Look at the dust against the light. What are we doing in here!'

The other Dodo nodded, then in the same voice as before, he complained, 'What is this film, Killer on the Midnight Train, all about, anyway?'

Just at that moment, the Dodoes seemed to sense the Silent Faces behind them, and they went quiet for a moment. However, needless to say they soon started moaning again. 'I don't feel good. Yea, let's go.'

Hugh Jones whispered in a funny acid voice, 'The Dodoes are in,' and three Silent Faces near the back of Cinema Five started to laugh.

It is true to say that some picture halls, in the days of the Silent Faces, encourage the public to express themselves by shouting and bawling at the characters on the screen: for movies are not taken seriously by the people who live in the 21st century. In fact, in some special cinemas in town, you can even buy rotten tomatoes, and throw them at the screen. It is all a great game to encourage you to interact, and not be subdued by the old medium.

There are a few old cinemas left in the city, and it is mostly the Screen Zealots who go there throughout the year; they say that the Screen Zealots sit there in perfect silence and scrutinise the old films from morning till night. However, during the Film Festival, as has been said, everybody goes along to the entertainment centres to have some fun. The people in the 21st century try to imagine what it must have been like when humans were governed by filmmakers, and movie stars.

The people who organise the 24-hour Film Festival once a year are not interested in promoting films. No, they are trying to recreate what it must have been like when everyone watched films on television, and when everyone went to the cinema for pleasure.

Suddenly, a shot rang out on the screen and someone fell dead. The train sped on.

A few people cheered, then a Roughneck stood up and threw something at the screen. The Roughneck then expressed himself by burping, and saying, 'What a lot of trash - rubbish,' then he sat back down again.

Near the back of the cinema, the three Silent Faces were now relaxed: Brian laughed at the uncouth Roughneck, Hugh studied the screen like an artist does a canvas, and Lawrence watched everything around him.

The actor ran through the train with a gun in his hand, shouting, 'No one move - and everyone will be all right?' A lady passenger screamed, and the man opposite her took a large drink of whisky. The train sped on.

Hugh, who was sitting on Lawrence's right-hand side, turned to his Silent Face friend and, feeling in a good mood now, he asked him: 'Lawrence, since you are the great philosopher of the Silent scene, please tell me all about the medium of film?'

Lawrence paused for a moment, as if to work out the beginning, middle, and the end, of what he was about to say. Then he spoke, 'Film is a fascinating thing, and even though it does not hold the masses the same way as it used to, I will tell you all I know about the art of film making.'

Lawrence looked back at the screen: for two men were fighting, and the women in the train were all screaming. Then the great philosopher from the Silent scene turned to his friend and said: 'A screen is flat like a canvas, and the filmmaker, like the artist, has to start from the point of the vision line; perspective then comes into play, every scene has to be balanced, suggesting three dimensions on a two-dimensional surface. When the eye focuses on objects on a flat surface of course it throws up many illusions, and this can make you dream. Shadow is important. It is true to say moving images in the mind have fascinated man since the beginning of time. The film, like all the other art forms, tries to excite the emotions. I guess in the beginning of time shadows were thrown onto a wall by the flames of a fire, and primitive man stared at them just like a child does when it first sees a magic lantern. Everything follows on and the spirit of the time comes into play: love, reason, death, logic, and the afterlife, are all things that humans have never ceased to wonder about. As we know film, for some reason, in the old century captivated the masses. Then the illusion died.'

Hugh looked at the great philosopher from the Silent scene and laughed: for he knew that every era has the right to throw up a philosopher who can understand and illuminate the illusions, of the past, the present, and the future.

As he sat there, Lawrence wondered to himself what it must have been like when film images were sent through the sky to every home to entertain the masses: 'They must have had to imagine so many different things.' Then he imagined some people sitting in front of an old television set: family and friends. Then he saw some Silent Faces in the past, heading for the pictures. One said to another, 'Hurry up, or we will be late.' Someone shut the door, then everyone headed outside to go to the cinema to be thrilled by the latest illusion. Every street it seemed led to a cinema and, as the people walked towards the neon sign, Lawrence looked here and there into people's homes through their windows. He watched a colourful TV sparkle. And when he came across a living room painted in turquoise, for a moment he thought the room was underwater and upside-down. He half expected to see someone in aqua gear: for the room looked like the inside of a swimming pool. However, a family of four thankfully appeared in the living room and they all sat down. The father looked a nice man. He seemed to know a lost Silent Face when he came across one. The father waved at Lawrence, and then he turned round and said something to the others in the room. Presently, someone switched on the TV, and they all stared at it again.

Two Spoonies, who were sitting in the same row of seats as the three Silent Faces, were holding onto each other as if their very existence depended upon the outcome of the film. And as they stared at one another the Spoonies muttered love sick things to each other. The young female Spoony said to the male Spoony, 'Darling kiss me, and I'll be your movie star.'

As if his life depended on it, the male Spoony, replied, 'Oh, Yes, I will.'

Brian laughed and turned to Lawrence and said, 'And then fly off to some paradise where all your favourite screen idols live.'

The Roughnecks upstairs in the balcony must have spotted the Spoonies downstairs; for someone threw a rotten tomato at them. Then someone lobbed a carton full of water over their heads; as you can see the Spoonies get a hard time when the Film Festival comes round every year.

Back on the screen the hero on the midnight train shouted, 'Where is she!' Then explosions went off all over the place; eventually the hero got to the beautiful woman. 'The train is going to explode!' someone shouted.

The hero grabbed the woman and they jumped from the burning train, and as they lay there in the embankment she kissed him and said, 'Thank God we are safe,' then the credits started to come up. Killer on the Midnight Train finished with the two of them walking into the sunset away from the burning wreckage.

Just then there was a huge eruption, like an earthquake. Lawrence looked around him and, when he saw it was only the people getting up out of their seats and heading towards the exits, he smiled to himself. Then he said to Brian, 'Goodness me, I thought another movie had started.'

2 The Baghdad Cafe

The establishment across the road from the Film Centre, known as the Baghdad Cafe, for the festival had a neon sign above the door that read: Old Films On Large Screens, Cheap Booze, Food and Games. The publicans after all had to do something in order to get a late night licence for the Film Festival at this time of year. Even though the Baghdad Cafe had only been opened for six months it was well known in the Silent scene as a rough joint.

When the three Silent Faces approached the Baghdad Cafe, from the dark street, Lawrence in a cautious tone asked his friends, 'Do you think it will be all right to go in here?'

Hugh Jones looked at him and, as he pulled the dark wooden door open, he said emphatically, 'The law states that only reputable bars can get a late licence at the Film Festival.'

Lawrence, however, still wondered if they should proceed inside, 'Are you sure this place is all right, Hugh?'

As Hugh held the door open for his friend, he looked at Lawrence's Silent Face. Then he said in the same tone as before, 'All the bars have stewards on duty at the Film Festival,' and he nodded in the direction of the tall stout steward who was standing

just inside the door. Hugh then laughed and said in a sarcastic tone, 'I mean what can happen to us in a place like this.'

Brian looked inside the Baghdad Cafe Bar at all the crazy people. Then he repeated the words slowly, 'Yes, what can happen to us in a place like this.'

Hugh, still laughing, raised an eyebrow as if to wonder at the question, himself. Then he turned towards the bouncer and in a theatrical voice, he said: 'Just look at this chap here - I mean who in their right mind would mess with him.'

The Steward looked at the three Silent Faces, as if to wonder what sort of characters they were. Hugh nodded a friendly nod at him, before saying comically, 'Evening sir.'

Brian laughed at the way Hugh spoke and, after he had looked at the bouncer's face, he glanced over at some desperate faces playing pool just inside the door. Brian, for something to say, said diplomatically, 'I see it is busy tonight.'

The majority of the customers could not hear the dialogue from the featured film on the screen, because of the loud music being played through the speakers inside the Baghdad Cafe Bar. However, no one seemed to care. Lawrence as he walked past the bouncer gazed over at some of the people packed inside the small bar and, after looking up at a movie screen behind the Baghdad Cafe Bar, he said, 'Right after that crazy film, Killer on the Midnight Train, I think we all need a drink. What shall it be, then?'

Hugh Jones, as he waited at the Baghdad Cafe Bar, once again teased Brian about how much he could drink in one evening, 'I would say about four pints, then you are anyone's.'

Brian did not say very much, he just kept looking at the bottles of beer behind the gantry, and all the strange faces in and around him at the Baghdad Cafe Bar.

Hugh taunted him for a time, but when he turned round, as if to confirm his Silent Face friend's drinking habits to someone in the crowd, he bumped into a dark-haired Roughneck, who was standing next to him. The Roughneck too was waiting to be served.

The Roughneck looked at Hugh, then he pushed him and shouted, 'Watch where you're going, baldy!'

The young barman, at the busy Baghdad Bar, looked up and gave someone their change. Then he looked back at the two men who were arguing with each other in the middle of the bar. To sort things out, the young barman tossed a coin into the air, and as he caught it he stared at the ceiling as if to wonder who to serve next. 'Heads says the bald chap, tails the Roughneck,' said the young man to himself, then he looked at the blank face on the coin, 'Right, Silent Face, what do you want to drink?'

Hugh, as if to annoy the Roughneck, nodded his appreciation like the actor Stan Laurel. The Roughneck did not like this and he pushed Hugh again, then he looked back at the young barman, and shouted, 'I was before him!'

It is well known in the Silent scene that Hugh has an explosive temper. Hugh immediately went bright red in the face and head. Even under the unreal lights of the Baghdad Cafe Bar his Silent Face friends noticed this. Lawrence wondered to himself: 'Hugh looks as if he is about to explode into a frenzy of violence - just like that character in the film: Killer on the Midnight Train.'

At that moment, Hugh raised his voice above the people around him who were trying to get served at the Baghdad Cafe Bar. He bawled, 'Just you wait your turn!' and for pure theatre Hugh calmly opened his wallet, then added sarcastically, 'you nasty little man!'

Lawrence, as he took his pint of beer from the Baghdad Bar, looked at Hugh. Then the great philosopher from the Silent scene tried to deflect the conversation back to cordiality and good humour: 'Hugh, I want you to tell Brian all about the film: Killer on the Midnight Train, for he still can't work it out.'

Hugh looked at Lawrence's Silent Face, then he stared back at the Roughneck. Lawrence noticed some of his friends; they were standing near the entrance staring over at their Silent Faces. The Roughnecks were laughing as if they knew what their friend was up to. Lawrence studied the Roughneck in front of him. The Roughneck certainly looked a strange character not to be messed

around with. He was dressed in a black leather jacket, and his untidy dark brown hair fell forward over his eyes. His face was dull and lonely. The Roughneck looked as if he only came out when it was dark.

The three Silent Faces, after the Roughneck had walked away, moved into the middle of the bar. Brian stood just by the old-fashioned video jukebox and, as he looked at the colourful pictures and the names of the artists inside the small glass box, he mumbled to himself, 'That's a good track,' then he glanced at Hugh's Silent Face beside him, and he said to him in a quiet tone, 'Don't worry about the Roughneck, he's just an idiot, let him shout his mouth off if he wants to. He will soon wander away and bump into another Roughneck, somewhere.'

Lawrence nodded, then added, 'Yes, they say in the Silent scene that you should always avoid Roughnecks.'

Brian looked at the small, but powerful, speakers around the Baghdad Cafe Bar, and for a time he listened to the music being played out of them. Then as if searching for a favourite song inside the glass box on the wall, he nodded his head from side to side, and flicked through the catalogue of CD's. Brian, to be cool, then lit a cigarette and as he stood there beside the music machine he watched some of the young beautiful ladies come in and out of the Baghdad Cafe Bar.

After he had picked a CD, Brian noticed that Hugh had still not shrugged off the evil image of the Roughneck. Trying to make him forget about the incident, Brian smiled and said, 'I tell you, Hugh, the woman in the Silent scene at the moment are looking fantastic.' And with a big daft look on his big daft face Brian stared at Hugh, as if to transfer the names, and the addresses, of the beauties to his friend's Silent mind, 'Really they are.'

Hugh took a gulp of beer and, when he had stopped staring at Brian, he said in an angry tone, 'What did you say?'

Brian did not want to argue so he let his mind drift away, and he thought about the old film world of the last century, then about the film they had all been to see, 'Imagine doing the love scenes with people watching you.' After saying this Brian's Silent Face

suddenly took on a wild look, as if he had just slipped under the sheets with the latest love machine in the Silent scene. Laughing he added, 'Sounds all right to me.'

The Roughnecks, in the crowded Baghdad Cafe Bar, looked over a few times. Their rough faces were still laughing at the Silent Faces who were standing by the video jukebox in the middle of the bar.

Just then Imogen, a math's student who came from England, and Eleanor, an office worker from Glasgow, walked into the 21st century bar. It didn't take them long to notice their Silent Face friends inside the Baghdad Cafe Bar. Eleanor, like most young ladies in the Silent scene, loved Hugh's dry sarcastic wit, and she loved to annoy him. Without thinking about what she was going to say she rushed over to him, and said in a light-hearted voice, 'Hey, Hugh, you sexy beast, how are you getting on?'

She then stared at Hugh and waited to be teased by him about her boyfriends, drinking habits, and some of the sexy outfits that she had been seen out in recently in the Silent scene.

However, Hugh did not reply, so Eleanor, somewhat surprised, turned to Lawrence and said in a serious tone, 'I saw you last week in a Silent Bar in town, and you just ignored me - just like he is doing now!'

Lawrence said earnestly, 'I never saw you, Eleanor,' then he wondered to himself what night she was talking about.

Hugh, on meeting young ladies, would usually start the conversation off with something like: 'Well, no doubt, you will be getting absolutely drunk tonight, then you will be disappearing with some handsome man!'

Sometimes, Hugh would just stare at the young ladies, then he would raise an eyebrow and they would all laugh at him. And sometimes he stared at their faces as if he understood their erotic secrets, and the events that take place in time and space in the Silent scene far from the gaze of society. However, at that moment in the Baghdad Cafe Bar his Silent Face looked away from Eleanor and Imogen and he said nothing.

Quite shocked Eleanor and Imogen both looked at each other. They knew something was up. The two young ladies then both stared at Lawrence's Silent Face, as if to gather some information as regards what was happening. Eleanor after a few moments grabbed the bull by the horns. She turned to Hugh, and in an indignant tone she asked him, 'Oh, what's up with your face, then?'

Hugh looked at Lawrence's Silent Face, then in a bad mood he walked away. Lawrence indicated with anxious eyes to his friends not to say anything, or to try and stop him. His silent thoughts were: 'If he explodes into one of his well known rages, he won't speak to any of us for days, and we all know what that means - don't we.'

As Hugh walked away, Brian whispered to Imogen, 'A Roughneck pulled me up at the bar, and there was nearly a fight - it's been one of those nights, I'm afraid.'

Imogen and Eleanor stared at Hugh's back, and as he walked away through the crowd they both shook their heads in disbelief. Brian tried to change the subject; he told them all about what had happened to him in the toilet inside the Thirty-Nine Steps Bar, 'Some nincompoop hit me on the nose - would you believe that,' he said laughing.

Eleanor laughed and Imogen smiled and, as if to add to the theatre of the evening, Brian added to what he had been saying before, 'I was thinking about asking this girl, who worked behind the Thirty Nine Steps Bar, if she would like to go for a drink some time, when all of a sudden Mr Action Man appears on the scene, straight from seeing an erotic murder movie, and follows me into the toilet and starts a fight.'

Lawrence watched Hugh push the dark blue painted toilet door open and, as the brilliant light shown against the white wall inside, a young Roughneck - the same one who had bumped into Hugh at the bar just a few moments ago - suddenly appeared. The Roughneck was on his way out of the toilet. The two men seemed to dance with each other as if to get out of each other's way. Then they bumped into one another again. Even under the colourful

spotlights, shining everywhere in the Baghdad Cafe Bar, Lawrence thought there was something queer about the Roughneck. A picture of his lonely face for some reason seemed to register in his mind. The strange man who had sallow skin, and untidy dark brown hair brushed forward over his eyes, just at that moment looked back out into the crowded bar as if he was searching for someone. Hugh, after the curious incident, seemed to take a backward step away from him. Then the door shut, leaving the two men inside.

A few minutes later the man in the black leather jacket with the pallid face came out of the toilet. Presently, he walked by Lawrence, and rejoined a crowd of Roughnecks over by one of the pool tables opposite the bar. He seemed to be excited about something. Even though he was standing a little bit away Lawrence overheard the Roughneck say to someone something about getting out of the Baghdad Cafe Bar quickly, then the voice disappeared, along with the figure. After a moment or two, he said to Brian, 'I'd better go and see if Hugh is all right.'

Brian, as if in automatic pilot, shouted against the loud music, 'Yea, tell him it's his round!' then he looked back at his Silent Face friend Imogen, and he started to dance, 'I love this record.'

As Lawrence walked away, Brian continued to chat, 'You should hear some of the funky new bands that are playing in the Silent scene at the moment...'

Just at that moment, the two Sponnies, who had also been to see the film, Killer on the Midnight Train, at the Entertainment Complex, walked into the Baghdad Cafe Bar, and as Lawrence's Silent Face passed by them in the middle of the busy bar, he heard the male Spoony say to the female Spoony, 'You're my darling, my dearest sweetheart, and don't you ever forget it, now let's have a drink,' and after kissing her on the forehead, the male Spoony added, 'What will you have, darling?'

The Sponnies, they say in the Silent scene, act like fools. In fact, most of the time they look like lovesick dogs. Lawrence, as he walked around them, said, 'Excuse me,' then he headed for the

dark blue door of the toilet, at the far end of the Baghdad Cafe Bar.

The young philosopher from the Silent scene was enjoying his night, and as he walked through the bar he laughed at the Sponnies, until he wondered to himself about how pale they both looked. Lawrence, as if to forget all about the pushing and shoving around him, whistled the theme song from the film, Killer on the Midnight Train, that he had just been to see. And as he walked on through the crowded bar he thought to himself, 'There's probably around 200 people in the Baghdad Cafe bar at the moment enjoying the Film Festival tonight, but for some strange reason they are all standing around the bar area. Why do humans love to congregate together in the one area?'

Thinking about what he was going to say to Hugh to cheer him up, when he met him, Lawrence mused to himself: 'I'll suggest that we have another drink here, then go and see another film - yea, that should cheer him up, all right.'

Once the dark blue door of the gents had been pushed open a white door appeared and, when Lawrence pushed the white door open, to his complete horror - there lying in the middle of the dirty blue and white tiled bathroom floor lay the body of Hugh Jones, in a long colourless robe. He could see that the body had blood coming out of the back of it. At first he could not take the image in. His Silent Face stared for a long time at the extinct eyes that were now staring up at the dull ceiling inside the Baghdad Cafe Bar toilet.

'Hugh is dead!'

'He has been murdered!'

'What is happening!'

Lawrence followed the blood coming out of the back of the body, and he watched it run towards the middle of the sink in the centre of the dark blue and white tiled toilet. Then he looked at his Silent Face friend Hugh Jones, lying there on the floor, 'Hugh is dead!'

Lawrence tried to shake himself and look behind the logic of the situation. In fact, he tried very hard to focus outward away

from the enclosed unfathomable world around him. For a time he just stared towards the small window in the room, then he looked at the dark alleyway outside, 'God,' he exclaimed.

After a few moments he bent down over the body, saying to himself: 'Hugh is gone from the Silent scene!'

Lawrence's mind seemed to be numb. The first real reaction to hit his soul made him run outside the toilet, and shout, 'Brian!' then he dashed back into the toilet, thinking to himself, 'Is this really happening?'

Meanwhile, back at the bar no one in the bar heard anything certainly not Brian. He kept on chatting to Imogen about some of the things that he had been up to in the Silent scene: 'There's this new bar just about to open, and I have heard that it is owned by the same chap who has got...'

Back in the toilet of the Baghdad Cafe Bar, Lawrence felt Hugh's wrist, but he felt no pulse. The sense of dead flesh made him feel a fool - it was as if the killer could never be caught and brought to justice. The earth for a moment appeared to be able to hide evil and turn it to fiction anytime it wanted to.

Lawrence's Silent Face, as he stood up, looked at himself in the large bathroom mirror. The mirror he noticed was cracked in two places, and in a split second between a dislocated stare he saw an image of a man dressed in a black leather jacket pushing a steel knife into a friend's back. Hugh fell to the ground crying something out loud, in the hope that someone would pick it up in the Silent scene.

Lawrence said to himself, 'Time will stand for nothing unless this evil man is brought to justice. The Roughneck in the black leather jacket, who bumped into Hugh at the Baghdad Cafe Bar, killed Hugh Jones, and I've got to find him and bring him to justice!'

Lawrence remembered the man's dark brown dirty hair brushed forward over his eyes, and for a second he saw him standing in front of his Silent Face. He remembered his sallow skin, his black leather jacket, and this time, he saw him running away from the scene, laughing to himself. Then the image faded.

Lawrence ran back through the crowded Baghdad Cafe Bar towards his friends. They were all standing in the same place, near the video jukebox. He wanted to shout at them: 'Hugh's been murdered!' but for some reason he couldn't.

Brian smiled when he saw a shocked Silent Face arrive in front of him. Turning to Lawrence, Brian said casually, 'Do you want another beer, Lawrence?' and after his Silent Face made a funny expression, he looked back at Imogen, and carried on talking to her: 'Definitely grab it while you can. In fact, next year I think we should all go on holiday together. Let's go to Spain, or France, there's bound to be bags of things going on there in the summer. We can go out all night and sleep on the beach during the day. We will meet lots of people from different parts of the world...'

'Hugh's been murdered,' said a shocked Silent Face.

Brian turned and looked at Lawrence and, thinking he was acting strange, he replied peevishly, 'Right,' then he turned to Imogen and said, 'They say Spain is cheap at the moment...'

Trying to come to terms with what he had just witnessed, Lawrence told them: 'That's right he has gone from our Silent scene into the final silent scene!'

Brian, Imogen, and Eleanor stopped talking and, as they fixed on Lawrence's dumb expression, something in the words in-between the logic, and the actual meaning, made them think about what he had just said.

At the same time, the three figures in front of Lawrence brought their glasses down, and their mouths all fell open wide. The world within and the world without, in that moment, seemed to crash and something in their spirits changed forever.

Rushing to get to the end of another sentence, Lawrence said, 'I can't tell you anything else. I think he bumped into that Roughneck, the one with a black leather jacket on, inside the toilet. There must have been an argument; the Roughneck man must have had a knife and stabbed him.'

'What!' cried Eleanor

'No!' shouted Imogen.

Lawrence quickly added, 'Yes, I'm sure that is what has happened: that Roughneck who bumped into him at the bar has killed our friend Hugh Jones!'

Brian wanted to say something, but he turned away as if to look for an answer in the faces of the crowd around him. Lawrence seemed to come to his senses after saying this and he looked over to where the group of Roughnecks had been standing. Seeing them all gone, he said earnestly, 'Listen I'm going after him, someone telephone the police and tell them what has happened!'

Outside the Baghdad Cafe Bar, in the dark winter's night, Lawrence ran across the road. He looked across at the Entertainment Centre, where only an hour ago they had watched the film: Killer on the Midnight Train. His mind seemed to race in and out of every eventuality, as he searched here and there among the passing faces who were coming and going outside the modern building. The images of the outer world as they appeared inside his troubled mind, kept repeating themselves over and over again: Hugh lying on the ground, the killer running through the bar, people laughing and drinking.

'Where did he go?'

'I've got to find him!'

'Where did he go?'

'I've got to find him!'

Suddenly, the face of the killer appeared in the crowd. He came out of a group of people who were standing talking to each other outside the main entrance to the Entertainment Centre. The man who had killed Hugh Jones looked over at Lawrence, then he hailed an electric taxicab from the street.

Lawrence looked along the busy main road and, although there were electric busses moving up and down the street, he could not see any more cabs; however suddenly when all hope had just about vanished a taxicab came into view and dropped someone off right outside the entrance of the modern complex.

As the four figures got out of the taxi Lawrence ran across the road; when he got there he jumped inside the cab and shouted the

famous phrase to the silver-haired taxi driver, 'Follow that car!' and pointed at the black taxicab halfway down the street.

The silver-haired young taxi driver nonchalantly put something on top of the dashboard. Then after tapping something into his personal computer, he looked round at the out of breath Silent Face in the back seat. The driver, as if to understand the ways of the new movement of the 21st century, screwed up his face. Then he said in a common voice, 'What did you say, mate?'

'Quick, follow that car!' cried Lawrence again.

The driver, as if part of the drama, then observed the cab carrying the killer halfway down the street. He said in a relaxed manner, 'Yea, no problem Silent Face.'

The taxicab pulled away, but it had to stop, for the lights opposite the complex suddenly changed to red. As if responding in the correct manner to the drama, the taxi driver said in a matter of fact voice, 'Is it that one there, sir?' and he pointed at the black cab about a hundred yards away.

Leaning forward Lawrence looked through the windscreen. Outside in the dark night, he watched the black taxicab, about 100 yards away, pull up at the lights. Then he said in an anxious voice, 'Yes that's it - tell your controller that the cab in front of us is carrying the man who has just killed my friend Hugh Jones!'

The silver-haired taxi driver turned round and laughed, 'Yea, that's a good one Silent Face,' then after laughing, he added in a carefree tone, 'Have you had a good time at the Film Festival, then?'

They lost sight of the car carrying the killer, but as luck would have it when they got to the bottom of the Main Street, Lawrence caught a glimpse of the killer's cab heading in the direction of the Merchant City. He shouted, 'There it is!'

The taxi man, by this time was well into his part in the drama, smiled to himself. He casually turned left and followed the cab, and replied in a easygoing tone, 'You know I saw this film at last year's Film Festival, called Death of a Friend,' then after looking out of the window at some of the Film Festival people walking up towards the main Entertainment centre, he added, 'It

was absolutely dreadful - no wonder they don't put films on the TV anymore.' Then, as if to qualify what he had just said, he appended, 'I mean I've seen a lot of films over the years at the Film Festival, but I couldn't really say, in one way or another, if they were any good or not. The wife likes to go, though...'

Lawrence did not want to distract him, or get on the wrong side of him, so he just watched the cab in front of him, and he kept on saying, 'Yea, yea...'

The driver laughed, then he must have thought of something else, for he immediately changed the subject, 'But I have got to tell you this, Silent Face, I had a good hire to Aberdeen last night. You are never going to believe this one; I took this stripper home,' and after he had finished laughing he indicated that he wanted to turn right, 'And you know when we got there she asked me to come in and watch her perform. I thought I'd better not - you know what I mean, Silent Face - for I knew I had to take her all the way back to Glasgow again, and you don't know what sort of things can happen in the back of a cab after a woman has stripped off, now do you,' and he roared with laughter.

The taxi driver heard the man in the back seat shout at him: 'Listen the man in the taxi in front of us has just murdered my friend Hugh Jones, in the Baghdad Cafe Bar opposite the Film complex - keep your eye on that cab!'

The silver-haired driver slowed the cab down and, after he had pulled up at the next set of traffic lights, he turned round and looked at the young man in the back of his cab. In a worldly way, he gazed at his Silent Face, then he said in a common voice, 'All right, I believe you, Silent Face - thousands wouldn't.'

Just at that moment, the black taxi in front of them stopped somewhere in the dark night; the killer got out and the cab drove off. Lawrence told the driver where to stop, and as he paid the driver he watched the man go into a well known bar, behind the old High Court building.

The young Silent Face, as he crashed through the pub doors, promised himself, 'I'll never forget his white face and black leather

jacket, or his dark brown hair brushed forward over his eyes. I'll get him, and bring him to justice.'

The Sheriff Court Bar was known by some in the Silent scene as a Bohemian joint. However, the punters tonight were all busy celebrating the Film Festival. When Lawrence entered the bar no one looked at him. The place was packed. The Sheriff Court Bar, like a lot of other bars in the city, had chosen a theme for the Festival: Welcome To The Wild West Film Party Night, read the banner behind the bar. Many of the customers had come along as Cowboys, and some had come along as Indians. There were no bouncers inside, or outside, the pub so our Silent Face hero, now turned detective, had a nervous look on his face as he searched here and there inside the bar, for the man who had just killed his Silent Face friend Hugh Jones.

Just then, someone in the middle of the pub fired a blank shot at the ceiling, and everyone turned round and looked at him. Then some people cheered. The shot made Lawrence shudder and just for a moment he remembered a scene from the film: Killer on the Midnight Train. A big man in a sheepskin coat walked by him, and Lawrence thought he saw the face of the killer, diving for cover behind the bar; however it wasn't him, for the man stood up and he started pouring a pint for someone. The man obviously worked there. His Silent Face, right in the middle of the partygoers, noticed that the pub had only one door for the people to enter and leave through: the front door. The other door - which was the fire exit - was shut. When he looked behind the bar again, he noticed a small door that led to a storeroom and, as he stared at it, he thought to himself, 'He must be hiding down there.'

Lawrence, moved to the bar, and as he leaned up against it he looked at some of the characters around him. Thinking about everything that had happened, he said to himself, 'If he is not in there, I guess it won't be difficult to spot him; for the killer is not a Cowboy or an Indian.'

Trying to calm himself down his Silent Face smiled at some of the people around the busy party bar. He noticed one or two Silent Faces dressed up as Cowboys inside the bar - but he didn't

know any of them. Lawrence thought he had better not mention anything to anyone about why he was here, for the fear of getting thrown out.

After a few minutes, he ordered a pint of lager from the beautiful dark haired young squaw behind the bar, and there inside the Sheriff Court Bar, he waited for the killer to surface. Without showing any emotion his Silent Face looked around the Wild West scene to see if there was anyone wearing a black leather jacket inside the busy bar. Suddenly, the door opened behind the bar and a light shown out from the dark storeroom. A fat man went inside and lifted a plastic bucket and threw some ice into it. He could see there was no one hiding in there.

Lawrence quickly turned away, and he picked up his pint again. To his surprise he noticed a door ajar on the left-hand side of the bar. Then he observed a stairway that led upstairs to some rooms, 'That must be where the guests stay,' he thought, and as he picked up a few cashew nuts from a saucer on top of the bar, Lawrence's mind mumbled to himself, 'He may well be up there hiding. I'd better check it out later on.'

Just at that moment, the young beautiful squaw behind the bar said to the red-faced fat Cowboy on the other side of the bar: 'I don't know why he does it - he gets so angry and then he strikes out, and he hits her.'

The red-faced Cowboy laughed and replied, 'No one knows what gets into his mind when he drinks that stuff.'

Just then, the young beautiful squaw noticed the young Silent Face man stare at her with big brown eyes, and as the young lady stared back she asked him in a sweet voice, 'Are you all right, Silent Face. Do you want something else to drink?'

Lawrence, in his madness, thought that she looked at him as if he was a killer, and he stuttered, 'No thanks,' and as he turned away from her he quickly added, 'I'm just looking for a friend of mine.'

The beautiful squaw with the dark hair behind the bar winked at him and said, 'Are you sure you don't want something else, Silent Face?'

Lawrence looked at all the faces at the bar and, although he heard her voice above the music, he did not reply. He whispered to himself, 'I wonder where he is?'

A few people looked over just then, and Lawrence seized the opportunity. He asked another squaw - a young blonde thing with a sweet face - standing next to him at the Wild West bar, 'Excuse me Miss, have you seen a friend of mine?'

The blonde young lady, dressed in jeans and a waistcoat, turned towards him and answered, 'What is he like, Silent Face?'

Lawrence looked at her sweet face, then he theatrically looked around the Sheriff Court Bar at all the Cowboys and Indians as if searching for his friend. When his Silent Face turned back round, he looked to his right, this time at a big fat Cowboy who had a Texan hat on. Then he said casually, 'My friend is wearing a black leather jacket, his hair is dark brown, and brushed forward over his eyes. He arrived just in front of me. Have you seen him?'

The young blonde squaw with the sweet face beside him smiled at the other squaw, behind the bar. Then she said, 'No, I haven't seen him - sounds interesting, though.'

The young blonde squaw with the sweet face winked this time at the big fat Cowboy with the red face, who was standing beside her, then everyone around the bar laughed. The Cowboy with the fat red face turned round to look at Lawrence's Silent Face. Then after he had eyed him, he asked him in a drunken voice, 'Is your friend a Cowboy or an Indian, Silent Face,' then he belched.

Lawrence looked at him, and said in a low tone, 'Don't you worry, I will find the man who killed Hugh Jones!' and then he turned away in disgust.

'Queer chap,' someone muttered beside him at the bar.

Another Cowboy nearby snapped, 'Needs a good kick up the ass, if you ask me!'

The young blonde squaw beside him at the Wild West Bar seemed to know a bit about the Silent scene. She said in a sure tone to the other squaw behind the bar, 'He dresses in the style of the new movement, who are popular at the moment in the 21st

century. They call themselves Silent Faces; they have their own scene.'

Lawrence listened to her and then he heard a man beside her say, 'Looks a bit of a strange Silent Face, probably went to see the wrong film at the Film Festival - serves him right.'

The barmaid just then looked at some figures coming in to the Sheriff Court Bar. Lawrence slowly turned round to see who it was; he recognised them as Ack-Ack girls. Ack-Ack girls, they say in the Silent scene, are wild young women who always want to argue with the opposite sex. Lawrence, as the Ack-Ack girls came towards him, looked up the stairs on the left-hand side of the bar. He wondered if the killer was hiding up there in one of the rooms, 'I better go up there and see.'

'Right, out of the way Silent Face,' cried an Ack-Ack girl and, before pushing him out of the way, she moaned: 'Why are you not with your Silent Face friends at some big event in the Silent scene.'

The Ack-Ack girl after this slowly turned round and looked at the barmaid. Then she playfully slapped the counter and said, 'Right two pints of beer, young lady!'

The squaw behind the bar laughed, then taking part in the comedy she said in a wild west accent, 'Coming right up, mam.'

The other Ack-Ack girl, as if to annoy our Silent Face hero, butted in at that moment. She said to Lawrence in a bittersweet voice, 'Did you know that 52% of all divorced women are beaten up by their partners every year,' then after looking at the barmaid, she nodded, and said, 'Tell that to your Silent Face friends in the Silent scene, the next time you come across them.'

Lawrence smiled at her ugly face, and after he had scanned the late-night faces beside her, who were all dressed up as Cowboys and Indians, he said, 'No, I didn't know that,' then he looked away.

The Silent Face man then watched a tall bald young man come behind the bar. The young man had apparently been taking a break. The tall bald barman, dressed all in black, had his shirt open to the waist, and inside two holsters he had two guns. The tall bald barman had wire earrings through his ears, his nose, and

through his nipples. 'I wonder what scene he's into,' Lawrence chuckled to himself.

Lawrence felt that the Wild West Film Party Night inside the Sheriff Court Bar had an unreal feel to it; people had stopped dancing and it appeared to him that they had forgotten what they had come for. The partygoers, for some reason, had all slipped out of their costume characters.

Inside the Wild West Party, Lawrence wondered what to do, so for a time he stared at the ceiling until he realised that he was looking at his own reflection in the brass fan in the centre of the room. After he had watched the fan wobble a few times, he turned round and looked back along the bar and read the colourful chalk marks on the blackboard: Half-price Beer For All Filmgoers, and then he looked at the coffee machine, and all the strange jars of colourful sweets beside it.

He thought about asking some people, who were standing beside him, if they had seen a man with a white face with dirty dark brown hair brushed forward over his eyes. He wanted to say, 'You have got to listen to me, there is a killer on the loose,' but then again he knew that they would just laugh at him and say: 'I think you have seen to many pictures at this year's Film Festival, Silent Face.'

Three Guzzlers sat at the end of the small bar, not far from the door that led to the rooms upstairs. The three Guzzlers were not dressed up for the party Film night. They were just sitting down talking to each other, and joking about what was happening to them at the moment. Guzzlers in the Silent scene are men and women who drink and eat all day. They do this wherever they are: they guzzle in bed, they guzzle in work, they guzzle in bars, they even guzzle when they are walking down the street.

On the wall on the left-hand side of the bar above the fake fireplace, he noticed a picture of a naked woman by an unknown artist. Lawrence, forgetting all about, the killer, the Cowboys, and the Indians, walked over and looked at it. As his Silent Face stared at it the young philosopher from the Silent scene for some reason felt that the painting had all the hidden secrets of life inside it:

loneliness, solitary living, and why men kill and love. Lawrence liked the picture and he smiled at the image that it seemed to portray. Then he went back over and stood at the bar again.

Just then a middle-aged couple dressed up for the Film party came down from one of the rooms upstairs and, as they walked over to the bar, Lawrence overheard the woman say to the man: 'I don't think that chap is very well he looks as white as a sheet. I think I'd better tell the manager...'

Lawrence, as quick as a flash, ran up the stairs, and there at the top of the narrow stairway he pushed a sandy coloured door open. Suddenly, the face of the killer appeared in front of him. He was crouched down, and his sinful face was staring down at the dreary carpet on the landing. The man in the black leather jacket at once looked up, and then in a mad panic he grabbed Lawrence's robe, and threw him out of the way. The killer then ran down the little flight of stairs in the direction of the street. As the man flew by him, Lawrence caught sight of that very same jacket that he had first seen inside the Baghdad Cafe Bar: 'That's the man who murdered my friend Hugh Jones,' he screamed! 'Stop him! Someone stop him!'

Lawrence got up and rushed downstairs after him. He crashed through the main door and out onto the street. His silent Face looked left, then right. The night sky above him, he noticed, seemed to be full of strange and pessimistic omens. And as he ran his mind raced between the events, before and after the terrible event. When he focused on the dark cold street he couldn't help observe how all the Film Festival people were all strolling around as if the devil had never been born.

When Lawrence saw the man in the leather jacket running through the crowd, he shouted after him, 'You cannot get away with killing someone!'

Some Film Festival people turned round and looked at him, but most filmgoers just walked on. A woman in the crowd, as the young Silent Face man ran passed her, exclaimed, 'I wonder what's wrong with him.'

‘Oh, it’s just another human who feels that he has not been given the right part in life,’ muttered the man she was with.

The killer was well along the street by this time; he knew all the Cowboys and Indians in the bar would not be stirred by such an event.

Lawrence reckoned the man who killed Hugh Jones was about 21 and roughly about six feet tall; he figured that he was the same type of athletic build as himself. Lawrence stared at all the faces going here and there up and down the street; he thought they were probably heading for some of the Festival events on at the entertainment centres in the city centre. He also observed that many of them were dressed up as old film stars and famous Hollywood idols. Just for a moment he thought it looked like a crazy scene out of the film titled: Killer on the Midnight Train.

When he reached the main road Lawrence in no time at all found himself lost in the crowd, and just when he thought he had lost the killer he caught sight of him again. The killer started running along the middle of the road towards the Modern Art Gallery. He was looking for a taxi.

Thankfully, a dark red private taxi pulled up at the rank, near the lights. Lawrence opened the door and shouted at the overweight driver inside, ‘Get after that man in the black leather jacket, he has just murdered my mate, Hugh Jones!’

Once he had jumped inside, the cab moved slowly off. Out of breath Lawrence added, ‘Quick contact the police on your personal phone, and tell them I’m after him.’

The driver of the private taxi, who was smoking a cigarette, stopped the cab. He turned round and said in a rough Scottish accent, ‘Sorry mate, I’m too busy tonight to play cops and robbers,’ and as he stubbed out his cigarette into an overflowing ashtray, he told the Silent Face man in the back seat, in a quiet but tough voice, ‘Right get out of here, before I throw you out.’

Lawrence got out and when the lights changed the driver sailed away. With no sympathy for the young man, the driver, not far along the road, rolled down his window and shouted back at

our Silent Face hero, 'Find a detective, the world is full of them!' then he roared with laughter.

The driver then pointed one strange finger up towards the roof of his private taxicab, as if to indicate heaven had no room for fools inside an ordinary Film Festival night. Then as he changed gear the driver cried out, 'Where do they come from!'

At this point in the drama, a Pakistani man dressed up as a gangster, no doubt heading for some party Film Bar, walked towards Lawrence. The gangster must have heard the taxi driver; for he brought his portable phone out of his pocket and shouted at the Silent Face man as he passed him, 'Oh, I know a good detective, Silent Face, I will tell him to get on the case, right away.' Then as he laughed he sang in a foreign tone, 'Oh, Silent Face, I think you have had too much to drink - the drink is bad for you...'

Lawrence looked at him, then he thought about stopping at the next phone-box to call the police, but he knew he would lose sight of the killer in the black leather jacket. As our Silent Face hero ran on he kept saying to himself, 'I'll get him, I'll bring him to justice...'

Lawrence lost the man in the black leather jacket in the crowd again, so he stopped running. And as he stood there his Silent Face searched the dark streets for the killer in the black leather jacket - but he couldn't see him anywhere. When he got his breath back he ran on again in the direction of the modern art gallery, and once there he fortunately caught sight of the killer again. The man in the black leather jacket, at that moment, flagged down a black hackney that was heading towards the city centre; however the taxi sailed by the killer and stopped about twenty yards in front of him, and picked someone else up. From a good distance away Lawrence watched the killer's black leather jacket run up a dark lane at the bottom of the main street - then our bold Silent Face hero went after him. Lawrence's robe seemed to change to all sorts of colours as he chased the killer through the 21st century streets of Glasgow. And as he ran along the dark street after the killer, Lawrence promised himself, 'I'll get him all right! I will bring him to justice!'

Every year at the Film Festival someone organises a Film Train to take people to London. The train is usually an old-fashioned Diesel engine, and it takes the route of the old Flying Scotsman train. The old-fashioned train is completely different from the 21st century model; magnetic trains in the Silent era glide from city to city above the rails. The old-fashioned Film Train leaves at midnight, and although anyone can buy a ticket for it, the Film Train is usually sold out well in advance, and you simply can't get a hold of one. The Film Train is always jam-packed with organised groups: people who follow some fashion, or fad in the twenty-first century. Inside every carriage of the old-fashioned diesel train different companies, can if they wish, sponsor different events. The Film Train runs non-stop from Glasgow to London on an old-fashioned rail-track, and it takes about nine hours to get from one end of the country to the other. An advertisement on the neon billboard outside the modern art gallery, in the heart of the city centre, flashed the information above our Silent Face hero, as he chased the man in the black leather jacket through the late night streets: Get On The Film Train. Some Seats Still Available. The Film Train Will Arrive In London Early In The Morning. The company logo flashed a few times, then the price went up. We Promise You A Good Old-fashioned Film Time. Plenty Of Films! Cheap Booze! Fabulous Food!

Not far from the main train station Lawrence looked up at the neon sign that was advertising the fantastic journey and, as he hurried after the killer, he promised himself, 'I'll get him even if I have to jump on that Film Train that goes all the way to London. I'll get him...'

For a few seconds he lost sight of the killer again in amongst all the Festival Filmgoers, who were converging upon the station. The magnetic train station, usually quiet at this time of night, was packed with people. The Festival people seemed to be coming and going in and out of every entrance of the modern train station.

Lawrence just at the entrance to the station spotted the killer. The man in the black leather jacket was standing by the ticket

window. He saw him buy a colourful ticket for the Film Train, then he watched him run towards platform number one where the Film Train was standing. The man in the black leather jacket, as he ran through the station barged into several people as he headed for platform number one.

Lawrence looked up at the huge notice board in the middle of the station, and he thought to himself, 'I've only got one minute to get on that Film Train before it leaves for London. I've no time to buy a ticket; I'll just have to jump onboard and make some excuse...'

Even though he was just about on his knees Lawrence ran as fast as he could and, as soon as his Silent Face got to platform number one, he spotted the man in the black leather jacket. The evildoer was just about to get on board the Film Train. The man who had killed his friend Hugh Jones did not look back, he grabbed a moving door and jumped on board the Film Train, as it started to pull out of the station.

Lawrence, as he ran on fixed his gaze firmly on the big round black buffers of the old-fashioned electric train; and as he stared he hoped the Film Train would not pick up any more speed. Suddenly, a door opened at the rear of the train, and a tipsy red-faced guard appeared. The guard grinned at him, and as he put out his arm to help him jump on board the Film Train, he shouted, 'Come on Silent Face, you can make it!'

Once inside his Silent Face did not know what to say to the tipsy red-faced guard, so he just smiled at him. The tipsy red-faced guard laughed, as if understanding the last passenger to board the Film Train. In a strange, almost dreamlike, manner he nonchalantly put his hand in his pocket and glanced at a very old pocket watch, then he yawned. After putting the pocket watch away the guard looked up at the colourful poster on the wall. Turning to the Silent Face man beside him he read it out loud: 'Passengers please note that The Film Train is a direct train. The doors will remain locked for safety, until you get to the capital.'

After a few moments had passed, the guard asked the young Silent Face man for his ticket. 'Just when your ready, sir,' he said with a huge smile on his red tipsy face.

Lawrence wondered what to do. He knew that the Film Train was usually booked up well in advance, then he remembered what the advertisement had said on the neon board. The tipsy red-faced guard as he waited for Lawrence to produce his ticket, whistled a nonsense tune to himself. For something to say he muttered, 'It must have been a hell of a trip to London in the old days - don't you think.'

Lawrence grinned and said, 'Oh, I've forgotten my ticket, mate,' then after a second or two, he added, 'Can I buy another one?'

Knowing that guards on special trains sometimes take money, our Silent Face hero paused, and produced a handful of colourful notes from an inside pocket under his robe.

The guard's eyes sparkled with interest and, as he rubbed his red face, he uttered, 'Oh, you will get me into trouble, Silent Face.' Then he produced a colourful long ticket that had the words written on it FILM TRAIN, and he handed it to Lawrence, 'That's fine sir, you can go anywhere on the Film Train with that ticket. There are three carriages for this year's Film Train.'

Lawrence said politely, 'Thank you, sir,' and looked at the information on the back of the ticket.

The tipsy faced guard put the money into a pocket inside his old-fashioned guard's uniform, and after a look through the dark window behind him at the disappearing station, he added, 'It's all very strange.'

Lawrence as he folded the ticket looked up at him and said, 'How do you mean, strange.'

The guard laughed a little laugh to himself, as if he knew what lay in store for the young Silent Face hero who had just got on board the Film Train, bound for the capital. Directly after this the guard, with everyone on board now, opened a small silver door in the passageway in front of him with a long silver key. The

elderly man smiled to himself, before he spoke into the tiny microphone.

The guard's theatrical voice was heard in every carriage throughout the Film Train: 'Thank you for travelling with Sirius Express. We hope you will enjoy this year's Film Train. The train's next stop is London,' then after a dramatic pause he added, 'Let the drama commence.'

3 Actors

Evidently a group of actors had hired the first compartment of the Film Train. They were throwing a wild party in aid of their favourite charity: for the Brokenhearted, the Sick, and the Poor in Society. The organisers had requested that the seats and tables be taken out of the first compartment, so that people could dance.

When our Silent Face hero entered the actors' party, he reckoned there were about seventy people standing drinking and chatting to each other. A small group was dancing to some old rock and roll music that was being played from a portable hi-fi, positioned on the floor at the far end of the compartment. Most of the actors were casually dressed. On first glance, Lawrence wasn't sure what sort of scene they were into; however he thought he saw one or two Silent Faces, in amongst them, but he couldn't be sure.

Just inside the carriage a forty-year-old looking Englishman with grey hair, tiny blue eyes, and dressed up like a middle-aged James Dean, spotted Lawrence's Silent Face. He was the first person to speak to him, 'Thespian or partygoer!' cried the strange man.

The actor, as he stood there, had an unusual half-smile on his pallid face. He slowly put out his hand and, as he waited for the man in the long robe to shake it, the actor half-shut his eyes. At

this point in the drama inside the actors' carriage the sensor inside Lawrence's robe searched for a colour to fit in with the surroundings; after a few seconds it changed from black to Winsor blu.

The actor, after he had shaken hands, looked up and down Lawrence's robe, and observed the colour change, 'Quite sensational,' he scoffed.

Our Silent Face hero smiled, then spoke, 'Hi my name is Lawrence.'

The man laughed a superior laugh, then he looked out of the Film Train window at the city lights, burning like campfires, way out in the distance. After gazing at the night-time scene, he replied, 'Walter Plinge is my name, and Shakespeare is my game.'

The actor looked at Lawrence's Silent Face, as if to search for a reaction to the way he spoke. Then with a grin on his pallid face he lifted up a tin from the floor, that had the words written on it: For the Brokenhearted, the Sick, and the Poor in Society. And as he rattled it he quoted the bard: *'Perhaps you have learned it without book: but I pray can you read anything you see*.'

The actor, seeing no reaction, kept on rattling his can at the Silent Face man in front of him.

Lawrence suddenly realised what he was on about, and he said quickly, 'Yes, of course.'

And from a trouser pocket inside his suit, under his robe, Lawrence brought out some coins and dropped them into the plastic can, and as the coins fell inside the can they made a funny noise as they bounced about here and there. Although the noise was strange it seemed familiar, and as he stared at the actor's tiny blue eyes in front of him he suddenly remembered the blind man on the platform from the opening scene of the film, Killer on the Midnight Train, for he too had rattled a can. He wanted to tell the actor all about the killer on the Film Train, but he knew he would see it as a huge joke and laugh it off.

Lawrence, a little confused, reminded himself, 'We all have a part to play in this drama, so play it well Silent Face.'

After wondering what to say, he uttered in a diffident tone, 'I am looking for a friend of mine. Have you seen him? He is about my height...'

Suddenly, all the lights all over the carriage went out, and Walter Plinge, who never missed a chance to shine, shouted: *'Who did strike out the light, Macbeath?'* (Shakespeare)

Thankfully, the lights went back on and the Film Train rolled on through the dark night like a powerful beam of light towards London. Lawrence, after joking about the original light bulbs inside the compartment of the old electric diesel train, introduced himself to the woman who stood next to Walter Plinge: 'Hi, please to meet you, I'm Lawrence,' he said with a smile.

The woman looked at him full in the face and, after taking his Silent Face inside her and wondering about it, she said in a sharp half-witted cockney accent, 'Please to meet you, I'm Sandra.'

Walter Plinge nodded, then said in a superior tone, 'Sandra is an actress.'

Sandra, as if to confirm this, lit a cigarette and as her face contorted she turned to Walter Plinge, and as if annoyed said, 'Damn, I forgot to phone my agent, last night.'

Sandra cursed the world and some of the people in it who she said were stopping her agent from contacting her. Then she thought of someone called Ted - another agent - and she added, 'They say Ted is the man to sleep with off-Broadway, if you want to get a part these days.' Then after she laughed, she gazed over at the black window of the Film Train towards the end of the carriage and, as if seeing the man's face there she had just been talking about, she mumbled to herself, 'I'll need to get his number.'

Lawrence could not make out if she was joking about sleeping with someone to get a part in a play or not; and from a silent image he detected the inside and outside of different emotions from within her. It was as if she wanted to be good, but she had for some reason given into a mean world of transitory ways. He felt, rightly or wrongly, that a dark lover had strangled a childhood dream inside her, during a carefree night. It seemed to our Silent Face hero that - now that her youth had passed her by,

the events in time and space in a grown up world had brought her down to earth. She had for some reason fallen in with actors and Bohemians, and now Sandra had to make the best of it: a career on stage was to be her final assault on life.

Lawrence, as he stood talking to the thespians, observed the weather outside the train. He noticed the window on his left-hand side of the Film Train was now being pelted by rain. The warm feeling inside the compartment and the cold feeling outside it fascinated him. He wondered at the dark shapes, midnight flowers, tunnels, bridges, tree lined roads, dark cattle, and safe and sound little homes, as they flew by the late night Film Train. The weather was really terrible now, and soon thunder and lightning followed. Lawrence felt that the weird images, as the Film Train rattled along, seemed to come from another world. However, the weird shapes and broad patterns somehow fitted in with the bizarre feeling inside the Film Train and, as it rattled along the old track to London, Lawrence sensed that the land would soon be covered with water.

'Look at the weather!' cried Sandra.

As Lawrence's Silent Face stared at the window his mind tried to make some sort of poetic sense between the calm inner world of the Film Train, and the wild scene outside. He muttered to himself: 'The world is spiritual and material, full of good and evil and, as it flies by my Silent Face, it looks like some abstract painting, coloured black and blu with strange shapes and views.'

Walter Plinge out of the blue laughed and shouted, 'Just what I was thinking, Silent Face!'

Sandra, as if understanding the look on the young Silent Face in front of her, made a daft face at him. Then she flicked the ash from her cigarette onto the grey and red speckled carpet below her feet, and she stared at his Silent Face again.

Lawrence felt that the actress's stare suggested that life at times was something wild and unbridled; however when it was ordered it was full of strife, and once more the inside and the outside of her persona conflicted as she stared at him.

When Lawrence asked her about her acting career she brushed the question aside. She declared, 'Oh, I'm just along for the ride, Silent Face,' and after she laughed she added, 'acting is just a state of mind, you fit into the character, you have to play, and the creative force pulls you through - that's all there is to it.'

Walter Plinge laughed, and then mentioned something about the power of words, 'Diction my boy.'

Lawrence said slowly, 'Really.'

Sandra looked at Lawrence in a childlike way, then she said to him, 'Well, that's what we have been told, anyway.'

Lawrence's mind seemed to have been wiped clean, because of all the crazy events that had taken place over the last hour. As if to retrieve his past in the Silent scene, he quickly said to himself, 'Don't forget there's a killer on this Film Train, and you have got to play your part, Silent Face, and bring him to justice!'

Walter Plinge at that moment said smoothly, 'So you're looking for a friend of yours.'

Lawrence, as he stared into the actor's small blue eyes, wondered to himself, 'I wonder what state of mind the man who has killed my friend, Hugh Jones, is in? What creative force is pulling him along? What power is making him play his part?' Then he replied slowly, 'Yes, I'm looking for a friend of mine.'

Sandra, in an ordinary everyday London accent, enquired, 'Want a drink, Silent Face?' then she laughed, 'You look as if you could do with one?' and in that moment she seemed to make up her mind about the young man in front of her, 'I think we have an extra can of beer somewhere,' she added in a matter of fact sort of way.

Lawrence smiled at her, then he looked at the rest of the actors in the carriage. There must have been more than seventy people around him - but he could see that the face of the killer was not amongst them. Looking down at the carryout on the floor, he replied, 'Yes, I'll take a beer, thanks.'

Without thinking about it Sandra picked up a can of beer from the floor and handed it to him, 'There you go, Silent Face,' she said and contorted her face once more.

Lawrence took the can of beer and thought, 'He must be somewhere talking to someone; for the killer like me has had to join strangers,' and as he opened his can of beer, he wondered to himself, 'Not unless he is going to hide in the toilet all the way to London - better check every nook and cranny, as I move through the Film Train.'

Looking for more clues as to what the Silent Face man was all about, Walter Plinge croaked, 'So tell me, Silent Face, all about the Silent scene?'

Lawrence replied quickly, 'We believe in a magical world: a world of pure spirit. We have little time for materialism.'

Although, Walter Plinge laughed he liked the way the young man spoke, and his style of delivery. Lawrence wanted to laugh too, but an image of the killer appeared in his mind again and, as he tried to focus on it, he remembered another scene from the film: Killer on the Midnight Train, 'I once took a man's life. I stabbed him in the back,' said the evil voice in a dry tone.

Lawrence, just at that moment, remembered the face of the actor in the film: Killer on the Midnight Train, 'Didn't he say something like that.'

Sandra, as if wanting to show that she was still interested in him, asked Lawrence in a sweet voice, 'What did you see at the Film Festival, then Silent Face?'

Lawrence wondered why she asked the question at the very moment when he was thinking about the film. Trying not to show any emotion he replied in a natural tone: 'Killer on the Midnight Train.'

The actor and the actress both looked at each other. Sandra said that she had seen the film a few years ago, and Walter after a second or two said he had seen it too.

Lawrence, trying to be clever, asked them, 'I thought I saw a friend of mine get on the Film Train just before it pulled away. He is wearing a black leather jacket; his hair is dark brown, untidy and brushed forward over his eyes. Have you seen him?' He paused to let the evil image sink into their thoughts, then he held his hand up

to his head to emphasise the height of the man, 'He is quite tall, thinly built, about my height.'

As Sandra lit another cigarette, with the stub of the previous one, she made a face at him, as if to say she didn't care, then she said thoughtfully 'No, I don't think so.'

Her action for some reason made Lawrence feel sorry for Sandra and her polite English ways, 'Are you sure?' he asked.

Sandra, as if exhausted by the topic, answered him, 'Yes.'

The actor who went by the name of Walter Plinge just at that moment cried out as if remembering his lines, 'Silent Face, if I had a part for every time I had to remember a face, I would be retired by now,' and he laughed at his own words.

Lawrence smiled, then he quickly told him, 'He's not a Silent Face man like me.'

The words did not seem to make any impression on Walter Plinge. The actor looked out of the Film Train window, then he bent down and picked up another can of beer from the stockpile lying by his feet on the floor. Walter Plinge opened the can then nodded at a tall man going by him. Then he said something to the actress about the man who had just walked by them, 'He used to be a top cameraman for state TV, you know. He has covered just about everything worth covering over the last fifty years.'

In the modern world of the 21st century, state TV transmits a 24-hour news service all over the world. It covers just about everything from just about everywhere; so to work for the news department on state TV, is indeed a prime job in the 21st century.

Walter Plinge lifted his can of beer high into the air and saluted the cameraman, and as he brought the can to his mouth he looked along it till he found Lawrence's Silent Face. As if the liquid inside the can had some sort of magical power to challenge this world and the people in it, the actor puffed out his chest, and bitched, 'Oh, the robe is all right, but the hair - you will have to do something about it.'

Lawrence smiled at him and marvelled about how an image can trigger a thought, and a thought can trigger a dislike. Then the great philosopher from the Silent scene replied, 'Well, I'm not

changing my Silent image for anyone,' and he put his fingers through his hair, and smiled at the actor.

When he had time Lawrence looked at Walter Plinge, and he studied him. He thought to himself, 'They say in the Silent scene that out of all the many occupations in society, actors are the most troubled beings: for they have to not only act against their true character, but they have to feel what is happening to that other person. Some people in the Silent scene maintain that when they are acting many of them lose complete touch with themselves and reality. One week an actor is standing under a balcony shouting, "Juliet!" then the next week he is making love to his own sex, and he has to do it with total conviction, or else his natural character will overpower him and ruin the part.'

Sandra had apparently been an office worker in London; however she had unfortunately lost her job. She had studied accountancy for a time. Then one day she found out that there were to many accountants in the country; nothing much happened for a whole year, so she studied marketing, then she found out that there were to many people into marketing; no job offers came her way and no city friends came to rescue her. One day while sitting at the bar inside her local pub she came to the conclusion that nothing, as regards work, would ever happen. So she fell out with the nine-to-five modern world, and it just so happened that not long after this she met Walter Plinge and followed him into acting.

Sandra smiled at Lawrence and after she had revealed the aforementioned to him she told him something about the part she had to play next; but once again behind her smile, and her sweet English ways, Lawrence detected a whirlpool of emotions.

Sandra said in a pronounced English accent, 'I like it when she says, "I have come to the conclusion that love and men, and men and love, have no compatibility; for they come at different times in the day." '

Walter Plinge nodded, and Lawrence laughed, then Sandra added mechanically, 'When she falls in love in act one the illusion of love seems to overpower her, and she becomes like a zombie. In the last act when she falls out of love, she loses all sense of time

and she becomes like a zombie again. She starts using phrases that are out of date: in short she commits a social crime. All her trendy friends disown her, and her old friends, by this time, are long gone. The character soon realises this, and she slips into a world where love is at all times possible: a make-believe world just like the theatre. This of course causes problems for her in society; people keep coming up to her and telling her that she is mad. She does not like to be alone so she drifts with anyone who is kind to her.'

Walter Plinge loved talking about plays, and not to be outdone he said in a puffy pretentious voice, 'Yes,' then after a pregnant pause, he added, 'I must tell you about the time when I was playing Oscar Wild in a little theatre down in Cornwall. I was on stage one night when suddenly I heard someone in the audience, down near the front row, whisper: "Look, there's that fag up there who comes from Finsbury Park," and you know it nearly put me off.'

Sandra looked at Walter Plinge; for she remembered the night and, after he had laughed, she quickly responded, 'That was the critic from the local rag; he is always giving you a hard time,' and she nodded to herself at the recollection.

Walter Plinge, as if acting, took a deep breath and said, 'Yes, I remember saying to myself, if I forget my lines I'll jump down from this stage and kill that scribbler.'

Lawrence nodded, then said slowly, 'Actor kills journalist, yes I am sure it would have made the front page of every paper in the land.'

Sandra laughed and after taking a drink of Bacardy and Coke she seemed to fall into a reverie, like the character she had to play on the stage. Then, out of the blue, she laughed and said in her natural cockney tone, 'Although his mate Dave is a decent chap,' and as she recalled the scene again, she added, 'It would have served him right, all the same, if you had jumped down off the stage and murdered him.'

Apparently, everyone in the actors' compartment knew one another, but for some reason they did not really mix with each other. All the thespians gathered in cliques, some of them praised

the world, some of them cursed the world, some of them hated the world, and some said they were just along for the ride.

At that very moment, a tall man with a beard, on his way to meet his acting friends in the middle of the carriage, nodded to Walter Plinge. The tall man as he walked by quoted something that had at one time no doubt meant something to someone: *'The actors are, it seems, the usual three: husband and wife and lover.'* (George Meredith 1828-1909)

Lawrence took himself to be the lover and he smiled a loving smile at the man. Walter Plinge did not say anything, however after the tall man had walked away, he said in a slow posh voice to Sandra, 'He played the part of King Richard at Glyndebourne last year,' then as if to acknowledge the feat he took a drink of beer out of his half empty can, and stared at the man as he departed from the scene.

Just then, the Film Train slowed down at a junction and everyone moved forward and, as it picked up speed again all the actors seemed to go backwards, then for a second everything went quite quiet. Then all the people in the compartment started chatting again. Some of the actors praised the world, some of the actors cursed the world, some of the actors hated the world, and some said they were just along for the ride. Walter Plinge as if to balance fame with all the other things in the present world around him, said, 'Yes, he played the part well, but he has not done much since.'

Lawrence wondered to himself if working on a part in a new production was more exciting than having played a part in the past; for he knew both were imagined: one in the past and the other one in the future. After a few moments of living in the past and then in the future, Lawrence thought to himself, 'I guess the actor is always working towards his part. The clock ticks by, he works away. The great day will soon be here. He works away, no rest, no play. The public he knows will soon be taking their seats, and they will see what he has been up to. Every day he moves closer to perfection, trying to bring the character to life. He tries

this and he tries that: for he knows that life is an act and every act is measured by the actor.'

Sandra lit another cigarette and thinking about her future again, she said, 'I must remember to phone my agent in the morning and see if there are any parts on the go.'

Lawrence, after a few moments, asked Walter Plinge, 'What is it like to be an actor?'

Walter Plinge sighed as if the young man in front of him had asked the right question. Then the actor said theatrically, 'When people come to watch you - you have to deliver, that is acting.' The actor paused for a moment and looked at the Silent Face in front of him. Then he looked at the can of beer in his hand, and after a moment or two Walter Plinge shouted, 'What would you know about acting anyway - you're just a young man living in a fantasy world!'

The actor put a cigarette in his mouth and lit it with an old-fashioned petrol lighter. Then as if on stage, he vented, 'Even death is an act.'

Lawrence the great philosopher from the Silent scene looked at him, then he looked at Sandra, 'What does he mean?'

Sandra laughed at the expression on his Silent Face. Then to add to the drama she suggested, 'But death has no encore.'

Walter Plinge, full of grand logic and grand statements, for some reason started to wonder about the afterlife, and he became serious. The actor, after Sandra had said something to him about action and delivery, declared, 'Well, I guess as far as the individual goes, if there was no life before life, then it is possible there will be no life after death. However, if there has been life before life then it is possible, there will be life after death,' and he shrugged his shoulders.

Silent Faces all believe in the afterlife and in the silence Lawrence quoted:

Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God (Mark 14: 25)

Lawrence's Silent Face stared for a second or two at some of the other actors in the carriage. Then he smiled at Sandra before thinking about some people in the Silent scene who had passed away. Sandra did not know what to do so she just smiled. Then she stared at him until a wonderful expression, childlike and sublime, came over her face, and her eyes sparkled as if understanding life and all its complexities. This time Lawrence noticed that the inner and the outer expressions appeared to be the same. Feeling calm she pointed at some cans of beer on the floor of the Film Train. The actress said in a composed voice, 'Why not take another drink, Silent Face.'

Not wanting to become too suspicious Lawrence took another can of beer from the batch on the floor. Then he started talking to the two thespians again, that he had met in the first carriage of the Film Train. Lawrence, seeing the hammer and sickle badge on the lapel of the actor's jacket, asked Walter Plinge, 'Are you getting ready for some kind of shift in the culture?'

Walter Plinge touched his badge with his free left hand and, as his face came alive, he said with emotion, 'I joined the 21st Trotsky group when I was at acting school,' and as he laughed he sang, 'Up the revolution!'

Lawrence laughed too and thought about saying: 'I have met Trotsky devotees in the Silent scene before,' but he thought he had better not. After listening to Sandra talk about someone who was still active in revolutionary circles, Lawrence thought about some of the strange actors, in the Silent scene, who went in for politics. Then he added to the debate, 'I guess it takes all kinds of people to make-up an interesting world.'

Lawrence felt revolutionary thoughts, when planted in the brain at an impressionable age, were linked to that strange double-edged dream called idealism; and for some reason for the rest of your life idealism was linked to youth, and youth was linked to causes, and causes were linked to unhappiness: for they could never be fulfilled. However, he knew no one really could understand them, and why they attached themselves to men and women. In fact, even when they attached themselves to children

no one could understand them and what lay behind them. The magnet of desire was still a mystery to everyone in the twenty-first century.

Lawrence, after he had finished speaking, smiled to himself, for he was still young, and he felt that he could make all his dreams come true - even the extreme ones.

Walter Plinge had been an actor for most of his life, and he seemed to move through the world as if knowing that it was making that performance on stage that made life worth living. He would fight the dark curses and devils with anything so long as he could step on to that stage and say the words...

Lawrence looked at the actor, then he wondered about stage lights, props, and the people who work in the theatre to make his dream possible.

Walter Plinge, as if reading his silent thoughts, suddenly cried, 'Yes, acting is in the blood and, after he took a deep puff on his cigarette, he ejaculated, 'You cannot separate the stage from the act, or the act from the stage.'

Sandra, who had only been acting for over a year now, was constantly on the lookout for advice so that one day she too would deliver wonderful lines. Lawrence noticed that she remained tightlipped when her friend Walter Plinge took the stage on the Film Train and started talking.

Walter Plinge said to Lawrence, 'The way to become a successful actor is to act your way in and out of every situation, on stage, and off it; for everything in life is an act, and every act has meaning, even if the act is a negative one. First of all, I believe that you should learn your lines, then learn to become your character, and then after that let the spirit world take over.'

Walter Plinge laughed after saying this and he looked at Sandra, then at Lawrence's Silent Face, as if the spirit of good fun had just descended once more upon them all. Suddenly, the music inside the actors' carriage stopped playing, and someone near the back of the train announced something. Every one in the actors' compartment, as the old-fashioned train thundered through the

night, stopped talking and focused on a mime artist standing in the middle of the carriage.

'Oh, it's Marcel,' cried a friendly voice somewhere in the crowd.

Marcel had painted his face white with greasepaint, and was dressed up in red breeches and stockings, and he wore a little black beret on top of his small dainty head. He looked strange and wonderful, as if he had one foot in this world and one foot in the next. To begin his act Marcel jumped up in the air, then he stood stock-still. After a few silent moments, he pointed at Lawrence's Silent Face in the middle of the actors' carriage. The mime artist opened his hand and slowly waved it at the Silent Face man in the middle of the crowd.

When Lawrence realised that it was him he was waving at, he smiled back at the mime artist. Marcel put his hand to his mouth, and then he opened his eyes wide as if to show surprise and delight at the same time. After looking at a few other faces in the audience inside the first carriage of the Film Train, Marcel opened an imaginary door in the middle of the compartment and climbed outside. With great difficulty, he managed to hang onto the Film Train as it thundered along through the night. After a few minutes he knocked the window, trying to grab the attention of the people who were standing inside the Film Train. Marcel mimed, 'Help me please! I want to come back inside.'

As if to share the illusion, Lawrence laughed and looked over at a few faces in the crowd. Marcel must have got cold and lonely outside in the dark night; for he soon climbed back inside the Film Train. And as he came back inside the bright compartment, he knocked his head on the window, and this made everyone laugh. Then he bumped into a beautiful young lady standing on her own not all that faraway from Lawrence. The mine artist seeing her face sad and lonely tried to make her happy. Marcel looked round corners for unusual things. Then he smiled at her pretty face, and after acting shy he blew her a kiss before disappearing into the crowd of faces inside the Film Train. The mine artist returned a

few moments later with a red rose for the beautiful young lady, and everyone clapped.

After the mime dance, Walter Plinge looked at a black man's face in amongst the actors' party. The two men smiled at each other as if they both knew Marcel. Sandra watched Walter. In a sweet voice she asked him, 'Who is that, again.'

Walter Plinge, his face flushed with delight, sighed, 'Who?' then he answered, 'Rob Thomas, not getting much work at the moment - but a good Othello if you ever need one.'

There were one or two other black faces in the actors' carriage; Lawrence felt that even though they were all on an excursion a natural tension existed between the colours, the actors, and the sexes.

Lawrence just then thought about moving along and speaking to some other actors in the Film Train, and asking them if they had seen a man in a black leather jacket, with dirty dark brown hair brushed forward over his eyes.

Suddenly, Walter Plinge said, 'Just before I left the hotel tonight, I heard on the radio that somebody had been murdered at the Film Festival.' And he contorted his face as if to understand devils, demons, killers and dead bodies, 'A young chap, I believe.'

Hugh's Silent Face immediately came into Lawrence's mind, and he remembered the first time he had met him at an office party organised by friends. Then he sighed to himself: 'That was the night Hugh had all the young Silent Face girls around him, I remember Hugh saying to them, in his usual way: "No doubt you will all be getting legless tonight, ladies..." '

'Are you all right Silent Face?' asked Sandra, as she looked deep into Lawrence's brown eyes.

'Yes,' said Lawrence quickly. Then the Silent Face man wondered to himself, 'No, I can't tell them it was my friend, Hugh Jones, who was murdered, and that the killer is on the Film Train. The whole train would be in an uproar. I'll keep cool and go through the carriages of the Film Train. I will go through them one by one till I find the killer and bring him to justice - time is on my side.'

Lawrence put down his can of beer onto the floor of the moving train, and then he looked at Sandra again. His Silent Face, sensing her eyes on him, smiled. Then he asked her, 'Have you got anything else lined up for the theatre for the rest of the year?'

Sandra laughed and replied, 'Funny you should say that, Silent Face, it's a strange play called, Love to Kill, and apparently this time I get the chance to kill my lover.'

Lawrence felt like screaming, but he nodded and said, 'Right.'

Sandra marvelled at the thought of killing someone and, as she gazed into the future, she swayed with the motion of the Film Train. With no expression on her face, she stared outside the Film Train at the dark shadows and mysterious lines moving here and there outside in the world. As if caught up in a drama somewhere in the actual world outside the train, she said mechanically, 'I wonder what it would be like to kill someone in real-life.'

Walter Plinge not to be outdone cried, 'Oh, darling, I've killed thousands of people in the course of my acting life - there is nothing to it.'

Sandra laughed and exclaimed, 'Yes, I think I would prefer to kill, than be killed.'

Walter Plinge, in high spirits, continued, 'I will never forget the first time I murdered someone. It happened in a school play. The play had the strange title: Doctor Death. I played the mad professor. Yes, the devil must have entered me young,' he said and, as his eyebrows went up, he smiled at the Silent Face man in front of him. Then he added, 'The next character I played was Jack the Ripper, and then a man called John Common, a bank manager, based on a true story, I believe.' For pure effect Walter Plinge paused, took a cigarette out of a packet, lit it, and then he thought about the scene again: 'Yes, I remember it well, I walked straight into the bank, and asked to see the manager. When I met him, I said: "Good morning sir, it's not a bad day," then just before he sat down, I plunged the knife deep into his chest - lovely stuff. He slumped to the floor and I turned round and walked out of the bank, whistling a popular tune.'

The art of killing someone on stage made Lawrence for some reason wonder about all the souls killed on earth: 'I wonder do they come back and haunt the killer in real-life, or do they petition someone here on earth on their behalf. Is Hugh helping me now?'

A morbid expression on his Silent Face made Sandra stare at him, and after a moment or two she asked him, 'Have you ever seen a dead body, Silent Face?'

Lawrence replied in a solemn voice: 'Yes.'

Walter Plinge quickly looked at his Silent Face, but instead of understanding what had been said, the actor looked away and made up a joke on the dreadful topic of murder, 'Well, I believe the safest place to kill someone is still on the stage.'

Lawrence thought about poor Hugh Jones lying in the toilet of the Baghdad Cafe, and somewhere in the Silent scene he heard his friend, in a familiar way, say something to him. Then he saw steel go into flesh, and Hugh's Silent Face fall to the ground.

As Sandra and Walter Plinge talked about their favourite writers, mainly people who had killed people in print to make a living, Lawrence wondered to himself why fate had turned out to be a foe for Hugh Jones. He said to the actors, 'It seems the world has its own ideas about who should live and who should die, and who should jump up on a stage and fire a gun and cry...'

Walter Plinge clapped his hands, and cried, 'Very good, Silent Face, very good!'

Lawrence tried to forget the mental image of Hugh Jones being killed, but the man in the black leather jacket kept appearing in his mind. He tried to keep his mind on the conversation with the two people he had met on the Film Train, and not on the mental image of the killer, and thankfully this seemed to help. After the actor had finished speaking, Lawrence wondered aloud, 'It's a funny business when you think about it: what makes real-life and what makes fiction - don't you think?'

Walter Plinge felt a wild director was behind it all, 'He runs through life and picks out people just like a stage director,' then after a pause the actor moved close up to the Silent Face man in front of him. He said theatrically, 'So remember, Silent Face, make

sure you don't get the role of the man who is going to be murdered in real-life when the parts are being handed out.'

Although, they were all laughing now, Lawrence felt unsettled and he thought he had better say something to them to sober them up. The great philosopher from the Silent scene looked out of the Film Train window and, as if catching the words from the silent shadows outside the Film Train, he said in a matter of fact voice, 'They say in the Silent scene that many people have been killed in many different ways by kings, queens, lords, and commoners. I have even heard it said that the spirit of injustice bides its time till the right moment, then it strikes out and takes revenge. The earth waits for the body knowing that nothing alien can happen on God's earth: for justice is part of the earth and part of the sky.'

A silence followed this, then Sandra looked at Walter Plinge, and for the first time the two thespians realised that the man they had met on the Film Train bound for London was no ordinary Silent Face from the Silent scene.

Walter Plinge, as the Film Train picked up speed, laughed as if understanding the creative spirit; then he offered Lawrence a cigarette. The actor uttered, 'Why not join us and become an actor, young man.'

Sandra agreed, 'Yes, why not.'

As the actor picked up another colourful can of beer from the floor of the Film Train, he smiled at the Silent Face man in front of him. Then, as if he understood every emotion in life, he spoke in an esoteric way, 'Yes, very profound, young man, very profound.'

The actress smiled and looked into the lively eyes of the Silent Face man in front of her, as if searching for the centre point of creation. Then she laughed and wondered where it all came from. Thinking about him, she said that she would put him in a romantic comedy. 'Yes, a love story set abroad, with a murder right at the end of it.'

Sandra looked pleased with herself and she lit another low tar cigarette, and when the Film Train slowed down the three of them went backwards, then forwards again. Everyone in the Film

Train was used to it by now, it was fun and they all laughed. Some of the actors praised the world, some of the actors cursed the world, some of the actors hated the world, and some said they were just along for the ride.

Lawrence, however, could still not work out if the images from the past in the Silent scene were there to guide him, or to baffle him. Walter Plinge, for the next hour, never really let go of the Shakespearean dream actor he wanted to be. The character he liked to play on stage, and in real-life, seemed to fit so well into every occasion. He believed that if he played this part well, it would never go out of fashion. This he considered was Shakespeare's genius: crating eternal parts for people to play. Then just when Lawrence felt he understood Walter Plinge, the actor spoke about his childhood and he told him about a time when he had once lived by the sea.

Lawrence, as Walter Plinge spoke, for the first time saw the boy in the man. The boy was looking at ships in the harbour and meeting old men in pubs, and the image of the actor for the moment disappeared. Lawrence picked him out again this time in a tranquil scene. There were other boys there; they were all running up and down by the seaside. The happy picture continued until the Shakespearean actor started talking about the theatre again.

After listening to Walter Plinge it suddenly hit Lawrence that the killer on the Film Train could have tried to disguise himself, 'He may well have taken off his jacket. He may well even have cut his hair, or changed its style in someway. He could be acting out another character - one he may have come across on screen at the Film Festival, or on the Film Train. The man who killed Hugh Jones could now be an actor in this very carriage.'

At that moment, he wanted to search all the faces of all the actors in the carriage of the Film Train, but unfortunately most of them had their backs to him; however he could see the majority were plainly dressed, and there was no leather jacket in sight. As he stood there with Walter and Sandra, Lawrence said to himself, 'The killer must have known all about the Film Train, and how the

doors remain closed, by central locking system, till the train gets into London. Then it suddenly hit him: 'But did the killer see me get on board - that is the question?'

Lawrence kept his eyes open for something unusual, but after a time he felt that the thespians, in the first carriage, were all very much in the acting profession and that the man who had killed Hugh Jones was not among them. After another look, here and there around the compartment, he was quite sure the killer was not in the first carriage of the Film Train.

Just then, Walter Plinge had a wheeze: 'Before you leave us young Silent Face and go into the second carriage, I would like to ask the great philosopher of the Silent scene to say something on the subject of acting.'

Walter Plinge said this in a posh voice, and it made Lawrence wonder if acting was only for the elite in society. Taking up the challenge the great philosopher from the Silent scene said, 'We all act in some way or another, and the act, or the action, must be thought out in advance and studied. The actor studies his trade, day in, day out, until the great event becomes reality. He must deliver what feelings the writer has in his mind. This is the most important thing.'

Walter Plinge became serious on hearing another person's thoughts as regards acting. Walter agreed and took the starting point of acting from the interpretation. In a self-assured voice he said, 'Yes, that's right, Silent Face, you must understand when an actor reads the part for the first time - that he is to play - he finds the key point of the character, something that corresponds to his own being. Then he makes his way out from that point and develops the part. The actor, by the time he gets to play the role on stage, must have the character inside him fully developed. Take for instance Sherlock Homes, we all know the familiar image: the dear stalker hat, the pipe, etc. Sherlock, however, can be all sorts of things inside that guise, and a good actor can make Sherlock his own invention. The emotion, the feeling, the tension, all must come from a new interpretation of the original character. When an actor plays the part of a bad character, he has got to

understand that the devil has filled the character's mind with evil, and act accordingly.'

Lawrence, with a strange expression on his Silent Face, stared into space. Then he agreed, 'Yes, he has got to take this on board; for the devil leads him astray!'

Turning his face quickly to look at Lawrence, the actor went on, 'Yes, that's right old Satan himself has tormented the man so much so that the actor has to feel evil, then act it out. When he goes forward towards his victim to kill him, the actor must be filled with an evil spirit and be excused of any wrongdoing at that moment: for he is under demonic power. The actor is in a kind of artistic trance. In fact, if someone switched the prop and put a real knife into the hand of the actor just before he went on stage, I'm sure the court would find him not guilty: for the prosecution would have to prove that he knew the knife had been switched. Did he act, or did he not act, knowingly? would be the question.'

Walter Plinge paused after he had said this, and he started to act like a defence lawyer. He held out an invisible knife in front of him, and his eyes sparkled as if knowing the audience would be by this time on the edge of their seats looking at him. Then he said in a strange tone, 'The moment of penetration must be savage.'

Lawrence, the great philosopher, thought about Hugh and he interrupted Walter Plinge, 'It has to be savage because evil has no interest in life or death - is that right.'

Walter Plinge looked at Lawrence as if he had jumped ahead of the script. The actor stuttered, 'Yes, the audience must be aware that the act has got to happen for the sake of the drama, and the secret is to coax them into thinking that it is for the good of the play, as well as for the good of mankind. They may know the play, but in their subconscious minds they will still wonder, "Is it right? Is it fair?" They will ask themselves questions like: "What will the outcome be? How will the other characters survive the ordeal?" The audience is the jury you see, and the actors mere phantoms of information. The audience will recall all the things that have happened so far. They will wonder when the seed of evil first penetrated the character's being. They will ask questions like:

"Was it because of the way he was treated by society? Or was it because of a material substance like money, or does he feel he has been cheated out of some inheritance?" '

Walter Plinge paused for a moment, then he said theatrically, 'However, I'm afraid sometimes life has a way of killing the wrong person for the sake of the drama,' and at that moment, he pushed the invisible knife into Lawrence's chest and shouted, 'Ahaaa!'

Lawrence thought about Hugh again, and in a dreamlike scene he watched his friend fall to the ground. Someone shouted something, as a song blazed out from the speakers inside the Baghdad Cafe Bar. Dark alleys and dead men seemed to be everywhere in his silent thoughts at that moment. He felt the walls around him close in on him. Then he thought of the place where Hugh had been killed, and the murder, that he had never seen, took place again and again in his troubled mind, then the scene faded, 'Yes, the act of killing someone is dramatic,' he mumbled to himself, as if to chase away the evil image.

Lawrence looked around him at some of the faces in the first carriage of the Film Train. Then something inside him said that all was well. After they had talked about some more plays and films, he said to the actor and the actress, 'Right, well I'm going to wander about and see what's going on in the other carriages of the Film Train.'

Sandra looked at Lawrence and smiled, and once again he felt the conflicting emotions from her character. Just at that moment, the lights went out and everything went pitch-black, and when the lights went on again it seemed to the young Silent Face man in the Film Train that all the actors and actresses in the first compartment had changed their characters. He felt that any change in their surroundings seemed to bring about a change in their own character. The wild influences in life could come and go at anytime, but the actor, and the actress, had to somehow get to know all about them, subdue them, then deliver them through a character.

Lawrence thought it wonderful stuff, and he smiled as he looked again at all the actors and actresses around him inside the

party. As the Film Train rolled onto London he sensed everyone in the first compartment of the train somehow saw themselves as acting out a dream part, given to them by a higher order than could ever be explained by image or representation. Lawrence thought them crazy people but he liked them.

His Silent Face wandered around for a time and looked here and there for the killer inside the actors' carriage. Lawrence sometimes stopped and talked to some of the thespians, 'What company are you from?' he would ask them.

Then a little later he would say, 'Listen have you seen a friend of mine, he is wearing a black leather jacket, and his dark brown dirty hair is brushed forward over his eyes,' but no one had seen him.

Lawrence felt annoyed that no one seemed to care; however when this happened he played his part, and just stared out of the window. The journey now for some reason seemed to be like the film: Killer on the Midnight Train. Thankfully, as his Silent Face stared out of the window, he wondered if the runaway Film Train would go on forever and ever and never stop. The rapid motion of the train mercifully seemed to calm his excited mind, and he started to think more about the real things in life like: love, justice, beauty and friendship. It was as if they were hiding somewhere outside the Film Train, in another world in some of the safe and sound little homes that now and again flashed by the train. The actors in the Film Train didn't seem to notice the outside world all that much. Lawrence felt that they all seemed to be stuck in their own scenes. Some of the actors praised the world, some of the actors cursed the world, some of the actors hated the world, and some said they were just along for the ride.

The Film Train as it travelled through the night seemed to be lost in a time warp. At times, it was as if the Film Train would never run out of land and would go on forever. Sometimes when Lawrence glanced outside the window at the transient world where he knew fear and anxiety, death and destruction lay, he would see the face of the killer through the window, and an evil voice would

mumble something to him, 'You will never find me - justice is for fools.'

Lawrence to balance his unsettled mind told himself, 'But the killer doesn't know my Silent Face is on the Film Train. I'll get him. He can't play with time: for time is not on his side. I will come across him before long in one of the carriages. I will confront him and bring him to justice. He has nowhere to go. The killer will be caught before the Film Train stops in the capital!'

Lawrence had never thought about himself as a detective before, but as the Film Train made it's way through the black night along the tracks, between built up towns and dark cities, he mused to himself, 'In life, I guess, everyone is a detective - searching for clues as they come to the surface - but very few people I know in the Silent scene have ever tracked a killer before.'

Just at the far end of the actors' carriage, our Silent Face hero met a group of modern actors. There were four of them. The contemporary actors were very arrogant indeed. They were all chic in dress, and very drunk. Lawrence knew the killer was not one of them: for they all had short haircuts, and they were dressed in smart modern lightweight bright suits.

One of them slurred, 'Hey you, Silent Face, come over here and have a drink with us! Life is for the living, and living is for those who want to have fun!'

Then another shouted, 'Yes, come and curse the world with us! Drink and be free!'

Lawrence replied: 'No, it's all right, thanks; I'm just looking for a friend of mine,' and he smiled at them.

The modern actors all laughed at Lawrence, then one said, 'Let's go and noise up that tetchy Shakespearean actor - whatshisname again, Walter Plinge,' and they all laughed.

Lawrence, playing his part, told the modern actors where to find him, 'He's back there - in the middle of the first carriage of the Film Train,' and he pointed the way where they should go.

His young Silent Face, before departing, looked back and searched all the faces of the characters in the actors' compartment, but finding no killer among them, he turned and

walked away towards the end of the carriage. When he got there a door suddenly opened, and he walked through it towards the second carriage of the Film Train.

4 Deviants

The sign outside the door of the second compartment simply read: Deviants. Lawrence, at the sight of so many men and women dressed in bondage, laughed to himself: 'Where do they all come from,' and after thinking about this, he wondered, 'And where do they all go to when the Film Train stops?'

Just inside the second carriage his Silent Face stared at the bizarre scene. After a moment or two he seemed to focus on a strange creature: a woman dressed in a black body stocking. The woman was coming towards him with a tray of drinks. She smiled as she got close to his Silent Face.

Lawrence, after smiling back, said to himself, 'Well, I have got to get passed this lot, whoever they are, and find the killer and bring him to justice - just like every good Silent Face should.'

His Silent Face, as he walked inside, quickly glanced at some of the strange faces, near to him. He told himself. 'The killer may well be in here, in the second carriage; for he is wearing a black leather jacket and would blend in with the surroundings,' then after a moment or two his mind seemed to echo the logic of his own thoughts, 'That's right the killer would hardly be noticed among the Deviants in the second carriage of the Film Train - better keep an eye out for him.'

The music being played in the second carriage of the Film Train was the latest underground sounds. The DJ, dressed as Satan for the party, was standing just inside the door. He held a microphone in his right hand, and was operating a small old-fashioned turntable system with his left hand. The music system was situated on a small table.

Just as Lawrence moved by his turntable, DJ Satan said to him in a cold deep voice, 'Welcome to the Deviants party, Silent Face,' and nodded at him.

Lawrence nodded back, then he looked through the packed carriage for the Killer on the Film Train. Just then, for some reason, he focused on a small bald man wearing only a leather thong. DJ Satan, at that moment, brought the old-fashioned microphone up to his mouth, but he did not know what to say. He looked up and down Lawrence's robe a few times, then he looked at the bald man in the leather thong who was standing not far away. In a slow menacing voice, he said through the microphone, 'Yes, it's good to have so many people from different walks of life aboard this year's Film Train,' and he laughed to himself.

Lawrence's robe, because of the velvet curtains in the compartment, at that moment suddenly changed to the colour purple. DJ Satan noticed the change and nodded his head up and down slowly, as if to understand the latest fashion in the Silent scene. No one else, however, in the compartment seemed to take any notice of they young Silent Face man, as he entered the second compartment of the Film Train. The wonderful modern flyaway image changed colour to Winsor blue, then it seemed to settle for purple to fit in with the surroundings.

Lawrence looked at the DJ and he watched him pick up a glass of whisky that was lying beside his turntable. DJ Satan lifted the glass up to his mouth and drank the whisky back in one go. Then before changing the music the DJ said through the microphone, 'I doubt if I'll be sober when I get to London,' then he changed the track.

The second carriage, unlike carriage one, had the original seats and tables in it from the old days when it once ferried people,

here and there, up and down the country. Tonight the carriage was now crowded with strange men and women from the 21st century. There was probably about 100 or so Deviants inside it. Some were seated, some were standing, and some were just lying about. The Deviants were all dressed in way out sexy gear in one sort or another.

Lawrence, when he studied a woman in front of him, felt that she could have been an ordinary citizen except for her strange outfit. The woman winked, then she smiled at him. She appeared to be quite natural about her eccentricities.

Just inside the Deviants' compartment Lawrence came across two Cloud Scratchers. Cloud Scratchers they say in the Silent scene are forever wanting to hit the jackpot. They pin their hopes on winning big prizes: nothing but the jackpot will do for Cloud Scratchers. The first Cloud Scratcher he came across was the small bald man, dressed only in a leather thong. The little man had a great big fat red bottom. The little man in the thong stopped the Silent Face man as he passed by his table. He puffed on a short fat cigar. Suddenly, as if it was against the law, he said in an angry voice, 'Where's your Anomalistic gear, Silent Face?'

Lawrence did not know what to say, so he just laughed. Then he looked at one or two faces inside the second carriage of the Film Train. The short fat man chewed his short fat cigar until he got it into the right hand side of his mouth. Then he stood up, took the cigar out of his mouth, and cried out in a posh falsetto voice, 'Jimmy Gates, however some of my friends call me - oh, never mind about that,' then he shook Lawrence's hand.

After Jimmy Gates blew out more cigar smoke, he introduced Lawrence to his partner, 'This is my assistant, 'Hank.'

Hank looked the quiet type, however he came alive at seeing a fresh young Silent Face in front of him and, being a kind gentleman, Hank said to Lawrence, 'Please to meet you,' and handed him a can of beer from a batch lying on top of the table, in front of where he was sitting, 'We have got plenty left.'

'Yes, have a drink, Silent Face,' blustered Jimmy Gates, before puffing on his short fat cigar.

Lawrence before opening the can of lager looked at a young sexy woman sitting on the table in the second compartment. The sexy young woman was listening to some music on a personal hi-fi machine. She was wearing red leather trousers, and her red leather waistcoat was open to the waist. When Lawrence looked at her he noticed that she was running a long white feather, down between her beautiful medium sized breasts. Now and again she would sway her head gently to the music on her personal hi-fi.

Jimmy Gates, just at that moment, noticed Lawrence's eyes sparkle with interest, and he turned round and looked at the sexy young woman. The small bald man in the leather thong, seeing that she was in a good mood, picked up an expensive camera, beside the batch of beer on the table. Jimmy chewed on his short fat cigar till he got it into the side of his mouth again, then he boasted to Lawrence, 'I'm the favourite photographer for all the models in here, you know, Silent Face.'

Jimmy Gates, as he brought the camera up to his eyes, shouted, 'Right, sweetheart, just keep it like that, lovely, now drop the feather down a bit, that's it, right, lovely - right now hold it there...'

The model soon got the idea; she jumped up onto the table threw off her red leather waistcoat, and put the feather between her breasts again, and she pouted.

'That's the girl!' cried Jimmy Gates.

There didn't seem to be any harm in it. In fact, the whole idea of glamour photography Lawrence thought amusing and good fun. However, when Lawrence looked at some of the faces inside the Deviants' compartment who were staring at the young model, he wondered how serious it would get before it got out of hand. Some of the faces in fact seemed to be lost in another world.

Jimmy Gates beamed with delight and took another picture and, after he had pushed the cigar into the right hand side of his mouth again, he spoke to Lawrence, 'You know, Silent Face, I picked her up on a magnetic train, last week, and I tell you she will be Miss World in a few years time.'

Just at that moment, Hank spoke to Lawrence. In a polite soft voice he said, 'My friend used to be a world famous photographer for a big international company,' and as his eyebrows went up he went on, 'but he gave it up for sadomasochism.'

Lawrence laughed and said, 'He did not, did he!'

Hank looked at the Silent Face man in front of him, then he gave a little nod to himself, as if to understand the trick that had been played on his friend by the hand of fate. Hank then illuminated his part in the sport, 'I have just come along this evening to keep him company, you understand,' and as he flicked his eyebrows up again he added, 'he gets lonely, you know.'

Lawrence laughed, then he asked Hank, 'Have you two always worked together?'

Hank put one large forefinger to one large red cheek. Then after a moment of reflection, he said evenly, 'Oh, no, no, no, at the beginning we worked separately; but last year we formed our own company called Celebrity Pictures and hit the big time.'

The sexy young woman standing not faraway watched Lawrence's Silent Face closely. Presently, she sat back down on the table between the seats and stopped posing for a moment. As if wondering about what was happening, the young lady looked at the small bald man taking pictures of her. The man, whose fat red bum was now leaning against the opposite table in the second compartment, was still clicking away quite the thing. Looking irritated, the sexy young woman switched off her tiny music machine, attached to a snakeskin belt on her leather trousers. Then she said in a matter of fact voice, 'I'm bored with this,' and she put on her leather red waistcoat again. After a moment or two she leaned back and looked at the face of Jimmy Gates the photographer. Then she slowly pushed out a right leg, and with a high heel prodded the chest of Jimmy Gates: 'That will do for now, Jimmy boy,' she said, in a sure quick-witted tone.

Jimmy Gates, playing the game, jumped back in surprise and acted like a schoolboy. He cried innocently, 'Watch what you're doing, sweetheart!'

Just then a half naked deviant girl walked by, and Jimmy Gates turned to Lawrence and said in a wondrous voice, 'The women in here are out of this world - did you see that,' and he went after her like a spaceship heading towards a new planet, 'Young lady have you ever thought about modelling, for Celebrity Pictures. I know all the well known models, everyone knows me. I'm Jimmy Gates the well known celebrity photographer...'

The Silent Face man could see that Jimmy Gates and Hank were not really as wild as some of the others in the Deviants' carriage. In fact, if truth be told he thought they really were just along for the ride. Lawrence, trying to reassure himself, said, 'I'm sure any man, or woman, would have been surely tempted to enter the Deviants' compartment of the Film Train if they had come across the sign outside the door.'

The next man his Silent Face came upon was a bare-chested man who had silver hair and looked in his early forties. The man walked about and pretended to be a butler; he went round filling up people's glasses with champagne. In a polite Scottish voice, he said to a couple of oriental looking women in see-through dresses, who were standing not all that faraway, 'Everything all right ladies.'

The oriental women laughed at him, and the butler with a smile gently bent forward and inquired, 'Another glass, ladies?'

'Ah, thank you, Kent,' said one of the oriental ladies, and before she took the glass she kissed him on the cheek, saying tenderly, 'Good boy.'

Lawrence looked at the bare-chested butler as he handed him a glass of champagne. Then the bare-chested butler looked at Lawrence, and said in a matter of fact voice, 'Well, what brings you into the Deviants' compartment of the Film Train, Silent Face?'

Lawrence looked at the two oriental women. They were now kissing each other. Then he answered, 'I'm looking for a friend of mine,' and as he looked through an oriental see-through dress, he added in a mechanical voice, 'He is wearing a black leather jacket; his dark brown hair is brushed forward over his eyes.'

Funny enough just at that moment a middle-aged man in an old-fashioned punk outfit appeared. Lawrence noticed that the man in the black leather jacket had his dark brown hair brushed forward over his eyes. However, his hairstyle was slightly different. His hair was like a bird's nest. The bare-chested butler stared at the man in the leather jacket, as he poured some champagne into a glass for the young lady in the leather waistcoat standing next to Lawrence. He tried not to spill any as he laughed, 'Is it him?'

The man with the strange hairstyle had a black tee shirt on. Lawrence stared at the fuzzy white letters. The letters read: Mr Hard. Mr Hard did not want any champagne, for he was on his way to the toilet with his boyfriend, a long-haired teenager who had on a tee shirt: Man-eaters Are Better Than World Beaters. Lawrence's Silent Face watched them as they walked away together, and when they got to the end of the compartment, Mr Hard opened the toilet door for his friend, and in a very high pitched voice he sang, 'Age before beauty,' and then the strange couple disappeared inside.

Lawrence, after he had finished his drink, moved farther up the darkened carriage. He looked at all the strange lights that had been fitted here and there above the tables; the dim lights gave an unusual atmosphere to the carriage. The carriage had a sumptuous look. And he noticed the purple velvet curtains on both sides of the carriage were brand new.

On the second table inside the carriage, on his left-hand side, his Silent Face bumped into a small thin man. The man was staring intensely into a laptop computer on top of the table in front of him. His everyday face was clean-shaven; his hair was short, black, and full of gel. He wore big round glasses that covered half his face. This man, unlike all the other Deviants in the compartment, was dressed in a smart business suit. And as he sat there, the strange man muttered strange things to himself about grants and funds coming out of the European parliament that would help him develop his art: 'Yes, I have got to fax this off to the European parliament tomorrow,' he reminded himself, 'should get the money sometime next year.'

Lawrence noticed that beside his small laptop computer there was a little paper nameplate. The italic ink read: Mr Euromaniac. Someone who had organised the event had no doubt placed it there, so as to tell the people passing by who the chap was; it was the same sort of idea as you get when you go to a wedding or private function. Apparently, Mr Euromaniac was a smart city man from Brussels, and as the Film Train rolled on through the night he watched sex films on the little screen in front of him.

Not faraway from him a dancer in red lingerie danced about beside his table in the Deviants' compartment of the Film Train. The young lady tried to catch his attention whenever she could.

At this point in the drama, a woman in a smart black suit with her hair tied up in a bun came into the carriage and sat down beside Mr Euromaniac. Lawrence took her to be Mrs Euromaniac, or at least part of the team in some sort of way.

As Mr Euromaniac eyes looked up at Lawrence's Silent Face, he slowly lifted up the plastic cup of water; after taking a sip of it he leisurely put the plastic cup back down on top of the table, next to his small laptop computer. Then he said in a soft numb voice, 'I have never seen a Silent Face in the Deviants' compartment of the Film Train before.'

Lawrence replied with a smile, 'You haven't.'

Mr Euromaniac turned away from Lawrence and stared at the screen on his laptop computer, 'No, never.'

As Lawrence stood there beside his table, he replied earnestly, 'Well, Silent Faces are everywhere.'

Mrs Euromaniac looked at him, then she declared in a soft voice, 'Oh, I have seen Silent Faces before.'

Mr Euromaniac interrupted her, 'But not on the Film Train, darling.'

Mrs Euromaniac repeated, 'No, not on the Film Train, darling.'

Lawrence smiled at her, then he looked behind the big square glasses and into the small eyes of Mr Euromaniac. Then he said calmly, 'I'm looking for a friend of mine,' and as he glanced at Mr Euromaniac's laptop computer he described the killer to him.

Mr Euromaniac listened to every word and, after Lawrence had finished speaking, he replied in a strange voice, 'He may be on the Film Train, for we get all sorts,' and he turned to his wife and asserted, 'don't we darling!'

Just then a dancer in red lingerie came by and stood in the passageway beside the table of Mr Euromaniac. She stopped dancing and looked at Mr Euromaniac, and then at the Silent Face man now standing beside her. Presently, she wandered away towards a group of friends over at the far end of the carriage saying something to herself about how strange and wonderful it all was.

The woman's friends, who were all dressed up in bondage, were sitting on the opposite side of the carriage in a darkened area. They were for some reason all looking over towards Lawrence's Silent Face. Lawrence could not see what they were holding, or doing with their hands, and he thought he had better not stare at them. Mr Euromaniac, breaking off from gazing into his laptop, said, 'Look at this.'

Lawrence looked back at him, then he looked at the screen, but he could not see anything and he said, 'What's that.'

Mr Euromaniac turned the screen of the laptop computer towards Lawrence's Silent Face and pictures of people just about to have sex materialized. Mr Euromaniac started to become excited, 'This is paid for by Brussels you know,' he said quickly.

Lawrence watched the man move towards the woman and the woman towards the man inside the little screen. The man stopped, he looked down along her body, and then the Euromaniac shut the laptop, saying, 'If you want to see anymore, Silent Face, you will have to pay me some money.'

The Euromaniac, as a smarmy smile crossed his white pallid face, added, 'Only believing is free in Europe - you should know that Silent Face.'

It is well known in the Silent scene that Euromaniacs are into sex, bureaucracy, and politics. They travel over different countries and peddle sex for money, and money for sex. The Euromaniacs act inside the law and outside family values.

With a slow movement the Euromaniac on the Film Train opened his laptop computer again. He reported casually, 'Do you know that this is actually happening at the moment in Brussels. In fact, the parliament have subsidised it. I have friends in the parliament, you know, Mr Silent Face. The programme we act under is called EuroToms, an old but new movement, I believe, in the Silent scene,' and as he looked down at Lawrence's biblical robe, he added sarcastically, 'Interesting, don't you think.'

Lawrence smiled, then said to him in a happy voice, 'So you know about the Silent scene, then,' and after the Euromaniac had nodded, the young Silent Face man added, 'They say in the Silent scene that the EuroToms are just like the first peeping toms, who must have looked through cracks in the cave.'

Mr Euromaniac did not like this and he glared at Lawrence's Silent Face. After composing himself, he said to Lawrence in an unemotional tone, 'Now don't spoil things, young man.'

Lawrence laughed and looked back at the screen in front of the Euromaniac, and he couldn't help but wonder about the real and the unreal images of life that were appearing in front of him. Mr Euromaniac flicked through a few foreign channels, and said in a soft, almost feminine, voice, 'Ah, here is a group of woman into wearing school uniforms.'

Lawrence at that moment glanced up at the luggage rack above the four seats, where Mr and Mrs Euromaniac sat, and his Silent Face stared at some colourful modern suit cases all stacked together. He wondered what the couple were taking abroad with them. Mr Euromaniac to grab Lawrence's attention tapped the table in front of him with a thin finger and, after an advertisement came on his laptop, he cried out, 'Look you can see a girl in her own apartment, making it on the screen!' and he laughed as if understanding it all.

Mr Euromaniac turned the laptop towards Lawrence's Silent Face again, and showed him a beautiful woman making love to another beautiful woman, 'You see what I mean, Silent Face.'

Lawrence wanted to laugh, but he kept his face straight and he said, 'I think I've got double vision.'

The thing about the Deviants' compartment Lawrence felt was that the people in this carriage didn't really communicate with each other. They communicated through the medium. In some strange way, they were all posing and trying to be natural. However, when someone said something, the other person would usually look away and say something back, but they did not show any real interest in the other person. Everyone seemed to be living in their own fantasy world. This individual existence, for some reason, made them rigid. They were frightened to be spontaneous beings.

Just then a tall attractive woman, all alone, slowly squeezed by the table of Mr and Mrs Euromaniac. The young lady with nothing much on, as she moved by the table, spotted Lawrence's Silent Face. She stopped and pushed out her beautiful breasts to exaggerate them. When he looked up from her powder blue bra, he smiled at her. The tall attractive lady smiled back at him and, as she fingered a chain around her neck, she introduced herself, 'Hi, I'm Emily.'

Lawrence smiled at her and replied, 'Pleased to meet you, Emily.'

Emily told Lawrence in a husky voice, 'I'm a novice at this sort of thing you know, and she winked at him.'

Lawrence laughed and he thought about saying something like, 'A novice at what?'

Then he heard her say, 'However, if you bring your Silent Face close to mine, you can kiss my candy covered sugared lips, if you want to.' Emily paused after saying this, then she laughed, 'And If you really want to, young man, you can put your Silent Face close to my pink cheeks, and I will tell you all about my unbelievable secret life.'

Lawrence laughed and kissed her on the cheek, then with a smile he said, 'Oh, I'd love to stay, but I've got to find a friend of mine,' and after staring at her candy covered sugared lips, he added, 'You haven't seen him have you? He is about my height, with dark brown hair brushed forward, white face, and he is wearing a black leather jacket.'

Emily thought long and hard, then she replied, 'You know, I did see someone like that getting on the Film Train. He looked as white as a sheet, as if he had just seen a ghost. Yes, I remember him now, he asked someone where the Film Train was going, then he simply disappeared.'

Just then, behind his Silent Face, the Euromaniac brought out a video camera and started filming Emily and, as her image came up on the little screen on his laptop computer, he smiled and sighed.

Emily looked at it and she said in a childlike voice, 'Now, don't you go transmitting my image to any of your funny friends on the continent, Mr Euromaniac; for I don't want anymore bizarre letters coming through my letterbox with weird images attached to them - you hear me.'

On the Film Train a girl danced naked for anyone. It only cost a few pounds to see her, but at the moment she was having a break. When she wandered back to her position, through the compartment, she stopped to speak to Mr Euromaniac. The naked dancer, when she knelt down beside him, looked into his laptop computer. In a high pitch singsong voice, she shouted, 'Can you send a photo-message for me, Mr Euromaniac. I want to tell all the movers and shakers all over Europe that I'm going to be a big star,' and as she paused, she looked at the Silent Face man standing not far away, 'I'm sure there is someone out there who wants to see me dance naked,' then she turned round and looked at Lawrence again, 'What do you think Silent Face?' and she blew him a kiss.

Emily looked at the naked woman, and with a smile on her pallid face she turned to Lawrence and said quietly, 'Well, what do you think of her?'

Lawrence was not sure about the woman in question. In a quiet comic tone he replied to Emily, so that the naked woman would not hear him: 'In the Silent scene they go by the name of Free Falling Fantastic Females. They are loose, liberated and sometimes lethal. They live out reality in a fantasy world, but apart from that I don't know much about them.'

Emily smiled, then she said to Lawrence in a serious tone, 'I don't really like the Deviants' compartment, you know. The people in here are so bizarre and unfriendly. They keep themselves to themselves as they sell their trash to everyone.'

Lawrence nodded in agreement, then he said, 'Yes, but they are funny.'

The naked dancer asked the Euromaniac to video her again and send it through the Film Train window to some EuroToms out there in the different continents of Europe. Lawrence may have laughed at the scene, but he did wonder about all those images flying through the air.

At that moment his Silent Face gazed out of the Film Train window between two velvet curtains and, when some stars sparkled like diamonds high above the beautiful earth, a smile crossed his Silent Face; for he found Rigel at the foot of Orion. Lawrence studied the stars for a while until he suddenly remembered the face of the man who had killed his friend Hugh Jones, and beauty suddenly turned to evil, and his eyes fell back down onto the dark earth, and the dream of the stars and the galaxies simply faded away.

His Silent Face looked back over at the Euromaniac. The Euromaniac was now videoing the naked frame of the Free Falling Fantastic Female. He was sending her into space to someone out there who had the equipment to receive her. For some reason at that moment Mr Euromaniac stopped filming the naked dancer and he questioned what he was doing. He put his small video camera down on top of the table in front of his seat in the Deviants' compartment of the Film Train. And with an anxious look on his thin face, he spoke to the great philosopher of the Silent scene. He said in a smooth business tone, 'You look to me, Silent Face, like someone who tries to understand life.'

Lawrence looked at his thin face, then at his small eyes behind his big round spectacles, then he replied, 'Yes.'

Mr Euromaniac asked gently, 'Can you please explain to me then, the meaning of sex when it appears on a film screen?'

Lawrence looked at Emily and then at the naked dancer, and he thought it all a great joke. However, to break the ice he smiled and, just like the actor in the film, Killer on the Midnight Train, he paused for dramatic effect. As if words had just been dropped into his head by someone, or something, outside the Film Train, the great philosopher from the Silent scene, replied 'Well, Mr Euromaniac, I want you to imagine that you are living two-up in a modern apartment somewhere in Europe.'

Mr Euromaniac, sitting back down in his seat on the Film Train, liked the game. He smiled back at Lawrence and repeated what he had just heard, 'Right, I'm living two-up in a modern apartment somewhere in Europe.'

'Now I want you to imagine yourself working inside your flat. Let's say you are writing a novel on your laptop computer - yes, that sounds good. You are working at a table by the window in the front room; it is late at night, but the curtains in your apartment are open wide.'

Mr Euromaniac took off his big black-rimmed spectacles and wiped them with a white handkerchief. Then he said in a soft breathless voice, 'Yes, I have always wanted to be a novelist.'

Lawrence went on, 'Suddenly, a light comes on inside the opposite apartment. The apartment is only a few feet away from your building. You look up and stare inside; for the curtains in the opposite flat are wide open too.'

Mr Euromaniac for pure theatre pulled back the purple velvet curtains, and he gazed outside the Film Train window. Just at that moment, for some reason, the Film Train stopped at a junction not far from a main station. And just then a brand new magnetic train stopped directly opposite the Film Train. Mr Euromaniac stared at the new magnetic train on the other side of the tracks and he focused on some of the people inside it, 'Yes, I see what you mean,' he said, 'I'm looking out of my apartment window.'

'Now a couple, a man and a woman, walk into the room, and they stand right in front of the window. After a moment or two

they start kissing and cuddling - you know the sort of thing, Mr Euromaniac.'

The strange man who went by the name of Mr Euromaniac looked at two people inside the magnetic train opposite him. Then he said slowly, 'Oh yes, I know, the sort of thing, Silent Face.'

'Now after a few minutes they start to undress, and after a few more minutes they start to make love; as I have said the curtains are wide open and all the lights are on. You stop working on your novel and you stare at them.'

Mr Euromaniac stared out of the Film Train window at the train opposite, and as he thought about the scene his eyes went all funny inside his dainty little head. He swallowed several times. Then he said, 'Yes, I like this game, Silent Face. It's my sort of game.'

Lawrence continued, 'After the couple have finished you go back to work.'

Mr Euromaniac half-closed the thick purple curtains inside the Film Train, and looked at Lawrence's Silent Face, 'Yes, that's right I'm writing a novel - better get back to work.'

Lawrence said, 'You finish a paragraph and save it to a file on your laptop computer, and just as you do this the doorbell rings. So you get up from the table near the window and go and answer it.'

The Euromaniac for pure effect got up out of his seat and he stood beside Lawrence in the passageway of the Film Train. Playing the game, as he stood there, he murmured to himself, 'I wonder who it can be.'

'To your complete surprise standing out there on the landing is the very attractive lady, who lives opposite you. Yes, the woman who has just made love to the man, in the apartment opposite you is now looking into your eyes, Mr Euromaniac!'

'Yes, I am now looking into her eyes,' he repeated mechanically.

Lawrence stopped speaking at this point, and he brought Emily into the drama: 'Emily, I know you have been standing

listening to me. You can act as the lady at the door please say hello to Mr Euromaniac.'

Emily, trying out her part, said with a smile, 'Can I come in, Mr Euromaniac, I would like a word with you?'

The Euromaniac stuttered, 'Oh, yes, of course, you can, please come in,' and he turned to the side as if to let her enter.

Lawrence smiled at some of the Deviants who had turned to look at the drama going on inside the Film Train. Then he picked the scene up again in the living room of the Euromaniac: 'Right, the two of you are now standing in the front room of the apartment of Mr Euromaniac, and because you have just met each other for the first time you are both feeling a little shy, so the two of you lookout of the main window.'

Lawrence drew back the purple velvet curtains again, this time further back than they had been before, and he pointed at a figure opposite the Film Train. The man was looking out of the window too. 'You see that man standing all alone over inside the modern magnetic train, there?'

A man, as luck would have it, in the other train just at that point waved over at the three figures inside the Film Train. 'The man you are looking at now is dressed and is having a cup of tea - you can wave at him if you want to.'

Mr Euromaniac rubbed his big glasses as if to clean them again, then he waved a tired hand. Emily made a funny face, and moved some fingers as if waving to a child. Mr Euromaniac looked at Emily and then to the director's surprise, he picked up the drama and asked the next question, 'What can I do for you, lady?'

Emily smiled at him and in a coquettish voice replied, 'Did you enjoy watching us, Mr Euromaniac?'

Mr Euromaniac looked at her and once more his eyes went all funny inside his dainty little head. He said softly, 'Oh yes, I enjoyed it.'

Lawrence, however, detected a comic inflection in his voice and he asked the Euromaniac, 'Are you sure?'

Mr Euromaniac stared at Emily and said tenderly, 'Oh, Yes.'

As the magnetic train opposite the Film Train moved off, Lawrence like an experienced director picked up the script. The man from the Silent scene instructed the participants as to where they should go from here: 'Right, okay now Emily you look at the clock on the mantelpiece and you see that it is one minute before midnight. Now from where you are standing you can see that it is cold and dark outside, and you know that it is nice and warm inside the room of the Euromaniac. You feel he will be in most nights, so you make Mr Euromaniac an offer.'

Emily thought long and hard about what she was going to say. First of all she looked out of the Film Train window, then in a soft suggestive voice she said, 'Right, every night at five minutes before midnight you can, if you want to, Mr Euromaniac, look out of your window and watch me make love to a man in my apartment. My associate, so to speak, may change, but I will always be there for you, Mr Euromaniac.'

The Euromaniac, now in a trance, declared, 'Yes, you will always be there for me, Emily.'

Emily smiled at him, then she looked at the film director.

Mr Euromaniac shrieked, 'Marvellous, I'll stay in every night, and just before midnight I'll stare out of my window!'

Emily walked away from the scene as if going back to her flat; however after a few paces she stopped, as if forgetting something. She turned round, and said in a low voice to Mr Euromaniac, 'Ah, but the curtains will close at midnight.'

Mr Euromaniac did not like the sound of this; he looked at Emily, then at the director, and in a falling tone he asked innocently: 'Why?'

Emily told him in a cold business tone, 'They will stay shut until you send me some money, through the letter box, then they will open again.'

Lawrence clapped his hands to signal the end of the drama, and the great philosopher from the Silent scene at that moment wondered about the ways of film and capitalism. Mr Euromaniac, feeling disappointed, closed the curtain on the Film Train and, just as the Film Train pulled away, he sat down in his booked seat and

he opened up his laptop computer once again. The Euromaniac to calm himself took a drink of water, before scanning the highways and byways of the World Wide Web once more.

A few minutes later a peroxide blonde turned up and she spotted the Euromaniac sitting there all alone. Mrs Euromaniac apparently had decided to go for a look around the Film Train, and had not yet returned. The peroxide blonde nudged the little man, and said teasingly, 'You said earlier on that you would send pictures of me all over Europe.'

Mr Euromaniac replied impassively, 'Yes,' but he did not look at her. He slowly lifted up his small video recorder once more from the table in front of him and, when he pointed it at her, the peroxide blonde came alive - just like he said she would - on the small screen in front of him. And as he fiddled with a button on the side of the video recorder, he uttered, 'Now, say something to the people in Europe who are watching this.'

Emily stared at the peroxide blonde, then she turned to look at the Silent Face man beside her. She said honestly, 'You know, I never fancied being a screen goddess, myself,' and laughed.

The Film Train just then thundered through a tunnel and Lawrence's ears went all funny. The voices from the song playing inside the Deviants' carriage at that moment all seemed to condense into one obscure utterance. However, when they came out of the tunnel the music had changed, and a love song played all through the second compartment of the Film Train. Emily knew a writer on the Film Train, and she brought him over and introduced him to Lawrence. She said proudly: 'This is Colin, and he's a writer,' and as she took Colin's arm she giggled. 'He has had to dress up like a deviant so as to write a story about the Film Train for a national newspaper.'

Lawrence nodded at the small man in fishnet stockings, with the light red hair, 'Please to meet you,' he said, then he quickly added, 'What are you working on at the moment?'

Colin sniffed - he seemed to be blocked up - and as he rubbed his small upturned nose he seemed to gather his thoughts together.

He talked rapidly, 'A play called: The End of Confirmed Information.'

Just then a man dressed up as a woman walked by Colin and, as he looked at him he too sniffed, then he exclaimed, 'Oh, it sounds pedantic.'

Lawrence ignored the comment, for he thought the title a good one. He asked Colin, 'What's it about?'

Colin, in breakneck speed, quickly explained the novel to the Silent Face man in front of him, 'Our state has, as you know, placed an embargo on harmful information,' then after a look here and there, he added, 'The old 20th century concept was that information, no matter how trivial, was worth pursuing - wasn't it?'

Lawrence nodded quickly, and replied, 'Yes.'

Colin, just like the Film Train, rattled on, 'Yes, well in my latest novel, The End of Confirmed Information, a new government comes to power in Britain, and tries to bring back the old outdated notion again: free and unrestricted information. They try to bombard the people of the twenty-first century with news and views from afar: Irrigation problems in Africa, political intrigue from Moscow, Japanese political conspiracies, the reason behind the political unrest in the Balkans, twenty-first century Nazis in Austria, the amount of people being killed in the Arab world for believing in an alternative religion, and so on.'

Lawrence wondered about all that information, and the way it would affect the ordinary citizen of the 21st century.

Colin coughed, then added, 'Now all this information starts to baffle the human race again and they start to study information as a subject. Independent News Agencies spring up all over the place controlled by big business. In short, the tycoons try to hold power again. They try and excite the people into believing that to be truly happy in life you have to become a know-it-all. This of course makes the nation arrogant and the people start to thirst after more and more information: data and facts, on a massive scale, become important once again. Perpetual knowledge in no

time at all becomes a drug and the people of the 21st century fill themselves up with all sorts of information.'

Lawrence thought about some people who can still be seen in and around the Silent scene who go by the name of the Dataknowitalls, and he smiled at Colin. Dataknowitalls in the Silent scene are old-fashioned information types: they read everything and anything just so they can tell you something you don't know.

Colin nodded again and continued, 'Well, my play puts a know-it-all and a simpleton opposite each other in the 21st century; one knows everything about anything, and the other one knows only the basics.'

Lawrence wondered how it would all end: 'So what happens?'

Colin stared at Lawrence as if wondering what category the great philosopher of the Silent scene fitted into, then he said, 'Well, it turns out the basics are the most important thing in life.'

Lawrence and the writer then went on to talk about books and plays that they had seen. This went on until the writer looked at Emily and said, 'Have you seen David Scott's play: Only Know The Facts.'

Emily, feeling bored, replied brusquely, 'No, I haven't.'

'Yes, it's a very good play, you see he comes to the same conclusion as I do: that information is not the most important thing in life.'

Lawrence loved the theatre, and he joined in the fun and asked them if they had seen this or that play. They chatted for a while, then after a time he said goodbye to the writer and Emily. The young Silent Face man walked down the middle of the Film Train of the second carriage until he came across some odd people dressed in fetish clothes.

In the middle of the second compartment a man with a dark six o'clock shadow, rough skin, and hair going from black to grey all over his body, introduced himself. The strange man looked down at Lawrence's feet, as he held out a limp hand. In a quiet tone he said, 'My name is Desmond. Have we met somewhere before?'

Lawrence looked at Desmond, then at the two middle-aged men beside him, who were dressed up in fetish gear. His Silent Face noticed that the three men for some strange reason were all staring at his feet.

Lawrence said, 'No, I don't think so. This is my first time on the Film Train.' Then for something to say, he added, 'And I think it will be my last. Listen guys, I'm looking for a...'

The man with the six o'clock shadow interrupted Lawrence. In a strange tone he told him, 'You see, young man, we are all into feet,' and once again he looked down Lawrence's robe until he came across a pair of plain black shoes.

Lawrence, listened to the song playing in the background something about catch me if you can - then he said cleverly, 'Well, most people have them.'

Desmond rubbed his dark face, 'Yes, that's true, Silent Face, but it is what you do with them that counts.'

Lawrence could not argue with that, 'Yes, I suppose so.'

After a drink of wine out of a large expensive glass Desmond smiled at Lawrence and said, 'I'm in the storage business, and you know sometimes it gets so monotonous during the day that I look up from my desk, through a large window, and watch the people passing by on the street above. And when I see beautiful feet inside sandals, or open shoes, it makes me go all funny inside.'

Desmond shivered, and the two other men dressed up like women, beside him, said in unison, 'He does - you know.'

Bizarre people into bizarre things are sometimes called Warps by those who make up names, in the Silent scene. They say in the Silent scene Warps can turn everyday occurrences into bizarre happenings.

'How unusual,' said Lawrence losing the thread of the story.

Lawrence, like many others in the Silent scene, knew that when dealing with other types, sometimes it was hard to tell when they were joking and when they were not. One of the Warps at that moment said to his friend, 'Most people look at faces, but we look at feet,' and as he looked down at Lawrence's black shoes

again, he told him the reason why: 'Feet are so delicate and yet so powerful.'

Some Warps they say in the Silent scene work during the day, and some don't work at all, but whatever they do they always seem to have plenty of money for their obsessions.

The three Warps seemed to come alive just then, and they all looked over at a woman at the far end of the Deviants' carriage. She had just slipped a beautiful foot out of a black high heel shoe and was now rubbing it against her calf.

One of the Warps sighed, 'Oh, look at that.'

Lawrence, seeing the Warps were in a good mood now, asked Desmond about the killer on the Film Train, 'Have you seen a man of about 21, in the Deviants' compartment, with dark brown hair brushed forward over his eyes; he is wearing a black leather jacket.'

The Warps all laughed: for there were so many Deviants in the second carriage of the Film Train, in one way or another, wearing leather. Desmond smiled and a gold filling in the front row of his stained teeth sparkled. Then he replied in a slow monotonous voice, 'What type of shoes does he have on, Silent Face.'

Lawrence did not know and he just smiled at him. Desmond felt happy and he lit a cigarette. With a timeless stare he blew the smoke out of his mouth, and as he looked upwards towards the ceiling he seemed to connect with a world of pure pleasure somewhere outside the Film Train. Then the strange man, as if stranded half way between heaven and hell, said, 'I just love taking off my wife's shoes at night, I examine her feet for hours,' and as he looked at some Deviants in black leather boots not far away in the carriage, he cried, 'Oh, I love it, I love it, I love it.'

The two other Warps echoed this, 'He does you know. He does you know.'

The Silent Face man in the middle of the Deviants' compartment stared for a time at the half-naked men and half naked women dressed up in strange bondage gear in the second carriage of the Film Train. Some were seated, some were standing,

and some were just lying about. Meanwhile, the music blared out all around them as the old-fashioned train rolled on through the night towards London. The three Warps seemed to stare at the people in the second carriage until their eyes went to feet, then they seemed to lose themselves again.

Just then a smart man of about thirty came into the second carriage from the third carriage, and wandered up the aisle like a man dancing on top of the world. The man dressed in a smart grey suit, white shirt, and jazzy tie, stopped in the middle of the Deviants' carriage. He took one look at Lawrence's Silent Face and said in a goodnatured American voice, 'Hoovered, absolutely, hoovered, Silent Face.' Then he asked Lawrence, in a quiet tone, 'You're not gay, are you?'

Lawrence, the great philosopher from the Silent scene, wondered what lay behind the question. He liked the word when it meant happy and carefree. However, he replied, 'No.'

Not wanting to play the language game the man said, 'Right, Silent Face, let's have a drink,' and he clapped his large cultured hands together.

Presently, the man pulled out a half-bottle of cognac from an inside pocket of his smart double-breasted suit. He took a swig of it. Then once he had settled down, he handed the bottle to Lawrence, 'My name is Bernard, please to meet you, Silent Face.'

Lawrence thought it would be impolite not to communicate, and he took a drink of cognac. Bernard whooped, as he looked at all the strange creatures in the second carriage. In a high tone, he cried, 'Yes, this is the life all right, Silent Face,' a paused followed, then more words were spoken, 'Where is that lovely young thing I met earlier on - what's her name again?'

Bernard looked for the lovely young thing along the party line in the Deviants' compartment, and sometimes when he came across a pretty lady, to attract her, he made a funny face at her. Lawrence thought it best if he sounded him out about the killer on the Film Train, 'When you were in the third carriage did you see a man dressed in a black leather jacket, with dark dirty brown hair brushed forward over his eyes?'

Bernard looked at Lawrence's Silent Face, as if not understanding the question, 'What!' he roared, 'Listen man I'm hoovered,' and as he looked away he snapped, 'You have had too much to drink, Silent Face - all the people in here look the same to me. Here give me that bottle.'

Lawrence handed him back the cognac bottle and, as Bernard shook his head, he slurred, 'It's strong stuff, eh.'

The man turned away and his wild blue eyes looked back along the carriage to where all the Deviants were standing. Suddenly he shouted, 'Hey ladies! Come on over and meet my Silent Face friend. What a swell guy he is.'

Lawrence stared again at some of the fantastic creatures dressed in bondage, plastic, and leather. A deviant in tight fitting fetish clothes, before grabbing a hold of someone in the crowd caught Lawrence's Silent gaze and, as she came up to him she said in a sultry tone, 'Hi, my name is Violet, but my friends call me Vi,' and she winked at him.

Bernard laughed for everything at that moment seemed shiny and new to him again; it was as if the creatures on the Film Train portrayed a new side of life to him. Just then the Film Train picked up speed and all the passengers were thrown off balance once more, 'Oh, I just luv it when it does that!' cried Violet.

Two Glazed Goddesses appeared; the two women who were both dressed up in sexy underwear. And as soon as they entered the second carriage they started to dance to the music playing inside the Deviants' compartment. Lawrence noticed that the material of their sexy gear, like his own, could change colour and fit in with the surroundings of the carriage.

As the Glazed Goddesses danced, everyone in the second compartment seemed to stare at them, for their sexy outfits changed from pink to blue, then from blue to red. Glazed Goddesses in the Silent scene are fabulous women who can produce amazing mirror images of themselves anytime they want to. They say in the Silent scene that once you have fallen in love with a Glazed Goddess you immediately become unreal.

Bernard understood the image and, as he took another drink of cognac, he whooped to Lawrence, 'I know they say that Glazed Goddesses don't make good mothers, but they don't half look good, Silent Face.'

Lawrence, as the Glazed Goddess approached him, nodded and replied, 'I have heard it said in the Silent scene that they want you to fall in love with their image and not their real selves - poor things.'

Bernard laughed and he danced a little dance for the Glazed Goddesses, then for some reason he cursed the world by saying that it was corrupt. Halfway through the dance, Bernard changed the subject. As he looked back towards carriage number one, he said in a matter of fact voice, 'Have you visited the actors' carriage yet, Silent Face?'

Lawrence was listening to the music being played inside the Deviants' carriage, and as he hummed the tune that went something like, 'Da de, da,' to himself, he replied, 'Yea, it's very good. I enjoyed it.'

Presently, one of the Glazed Goddesses, a redhead introduced herself to Lawrence. At first, she rubbed the sleeve of his robe a few times as if to straighten it, then in a faint high pitch voice she cried, 'Hi, I'm Zena.'

Zena then immediately shouted, 'Bernard, have you been drinking?'

The other Glazed Goddess named Vida laughed and, after putting her hand through her thick black hair, she said to Lawrence, 'You're cute,' and she stroked his face with a delicate long finger.

For a moment or two everyone wondered what to do. Lawrence spoke to Vida. Vida laughed at Lawrence. Bernard avoided eye contact with Zena, and Zena looked out of the Film Train window. Then out of the blue, Zena turned round and said, 'I wish I could go back to the old world and be a film star.'

Bernard looked away and grinned. Zena to get Bernard's attention nudged him in the ribs. However, just then the Film Train picked up speed, and everybody went backwards, and as it

slowed down everyone went forward, then everyone relaxed and started talking again.

'I'm thinking about dragging one of those deviant's back to my hotel when I get to London,' said Bernard in a firm, but friendly voice.

A sexy black young lady just at that moment strolled by. She was wearing the latest sexy body stocking. The body stocking had sensors attached, here and there, all around the erogenous zones. People who wear those outfits are called, in the Silent scene, Counterfeit Lovers: for they say they know only how to communicate through the Internet.

Right in the corner under the luggage rack near the end of the second compartment, Lawrence noticed another Counterfeit Lover. The young lady was staring into a portable laptop computer. She was sitting crossed-legged on the floor, and she too had on a body stocking. The woman about thirty years old had her hair tied up like a modern secretary. Lawrence could see that she was pushing a small button up and down on her computer screen, going through a collection of still pictures. Suddenly, a man's face appeared on the screen, and he started speaking to her. She introduced herself, by saying in a wild happy singsong voice, 'Hi I'm Adrienne,' and then she shook her head like a schoolgirl finding a friend for the first time. Adrienne paused. and pushed a button, and the man's face got bigger and bigger, 'What's your name,' she cried.

The man replied in a natural tone, 'Hi, my name is Gene, and I'm from London. Would you like to interact with me?' and he smiled at the camera.

'Oh, yes!' whooped Adrienne, who uncrossed her legs, 'I would love to.'

There was a long pause, then the man spoke again, 'Where are you speaking from?'

Adrienne, as if she came from nowhere in particular, laughed. Then she replied in the same singsong voice as before, 'I'm on the late night Film Train, in the Deviant's compartment,

and we are all heading for London. It's weird!' she shrieked before asking him, 'Where are you speaking from?'

The man danced his head about from side to side on the screen. Then he answered her, 'I'm in a friend's house,' a paused followed, 'It is fantastic, you know, we have met people from all over the world, tonight: Japan, Syria, Sweden; however you are our first Deviant.'

Some laughter could be heard from inside his room, and Adrienne after looking around the Film Train, as if embarrassed, said, 'Wonderful, sounds good!'

Lawrence wondered about Counterfeit Lovers, 'Do they ever meet up? Are they happy when they are off screen?'

Adrienne, just at that moment, turned round and looked at the Silent Face man standing beside her. Like an actress in a film, as if remembering what to do, she turned back and stared at her little portable computer screen on the floor. In high spirits she exclaimed, 'Oh, I just love looking at faces and wondering what lies behind them. In fact, you are never going to believe this, but I have just seen a strange Silent Face man on the Film Train - how about that then!'

Nonchalantly, a man in a leather jacket walked into the Deviants' compartment from the third carriage, and all of a sudden Lawrence saw a vision: the killer standing behind Hugh, then Hugh falling to the ground crying, 'Get him Lawrence and bring him to justice!'

His Silent Face stared at the man and, as the man in the black leather jacket moved by him, Lawrence grabbed him. The man wearing the leather jacket, however, was not the killer: for he was dark skinned and had a beard.

'Hey, what's wrong with you, Silent Face!' cried the man, quite upset.

Lawrence as he stared at the leather jacket wondered to himself, 'Why did Hugh not see the evil in the man's eyes? Why did he not just avoid him? Why did he not just laugh it off, and walk away?'

The flash of metal from a badge on the man's leather jacket made Lawrence think about the knife, and the movement of his arm inside the leather jacket the action. Lawrence noticed the man staring at him; somewhat embarrassed he apologised. 'Sorry mate.'

In the window opposite him at the far end of the second compartment of the Film Train, Lawrence saw Hugh's Silent Face, frozen in time. The face just seemed to stare back at him. Lawrence, as he stared tried to understand life, and the nightmare dream that had come upon him. Strange images followed this vision, and filled his mind up with all sorts of ideas. Lawrence for a time just stood there at the end of the Deviants' compartment, and he just stared at the vision in the window. He thought a lot about life and death at that moment, as he stood there. However, when he looked at his watch he knew it would not be all that long till they were in London, and he reminded himself, 'You have got to find the man who killed Hugh Jones and bring him to justice, before the train stops and the doors open?'

Lawrence watched the leather jacket move away through the Film Train, and a terrible feeling of a friend departing on a journey never to return entered his mind. Then a voice from the Silent scene comforted him, 'Good friends will meet again.'

Lawrence sighed and said to himself, 'In a strange way it all seems to be part of the everyday pattern of life - yet when a friend is killed, you can hardly believe it, never mind take it in. Death has no meaning when there is no reason for it. The unkind world goes on relentlessly, like some awful truth. All I know is that Hugh is gone, and the killer is on the Film Train heading for London. I must find him.'

A sweet voice out from nowhere suddenly said, 'I noticed you coming into the party.'

Lawrence looked at her pretty face, then his gaze went down her front along her braces, over two beautiful small firm breasts, and finally fixed on a pair of white leather trousers. Lawrence seeing her to be friendly and good-natured said, 'Oh, Hello,' in a curious voice, just like the actor had in the film: Killer on the

Midnight Train. Then he inquired, 'Are you enjoying the Film Train?'

The sweet voice said, 'I travel by train everywhere I go. I love all the exhibitions that go on from station to station; in fact when I read the heading in the paper: LIFE IS MORE REAL INSIDE THE FILM TRAIN THAN THE WORLD OUTSIDE. I sent for my tickets, right away.'

The young lady thought for a moment, then she added, 'The new magnetic train maybe faster, but I prefer the old diesel train any day. They have more style, don't you think?'

Lawrence muttered, 'Yes, I suppose they have.'

The girl in the braces looked at some of the faces inside the Deviants' carriage before adding to what she had already said, 'This year's Film Train is a bit of a laugh all the same. Don't you think?'

'Yes, I suppose so.'

Then the young lady introduced herself, 'Hi, I'm Amy,' and as she looked at Lawrence's Silent Face, she put her hand out as if she wanted him to kiss it, 'I'm one of those awful Lily-white People in the Silent scene.'

They say in the Silent scene Lily-white people are paranoid about cleanliness.

Lawrence smiled and said to her, 'So you know all about the Silent scene, eh.'

Amy laughed and as she pinged one of her white braces she looked down at her perfect white leather trousers and laughed, 'Yes.'

They also say in the Silent scene that Lily-white people are interested in nothing that lies outside the material world. Lily-white people are not like Silent Faces: for Silent Faces believe in pure spirit no matter the colour, the feeling, or the mood. Lily-white people, they say in the Silent scene, live in a material world where everything is pure white.

At that moment, Amy asked Lawrence, 'Why are you looking at me like that?'

Lawrence did not know what to say, so he just asked her, 'Are you having a good time?'

Amy shook her small firm frame as if expecting pleasure quite soon, and then she said cheekily, 'Oh, yes.'

Lawrence, in a voice tinged with suspicion, asked her, 'How did you manage to get roped into the Deviants' party on the Film Train?'

Amy sighed and looked at some anomalistic people going by, then she said, 'My boss goes in for this sort of thing, you know, so I thought I would just come along and see what was going on. I'll try anything once, me,' and after raising her eyebrows she added, 'they say it's all the rage these days - everybody is doing it.'

The young lady in the sexy white leather trousers, then added, 'Even Silent Faces, I believe, are into some kind of scene in the 21st century - are they not?' and she laughed as if she had found a crack in the wall that looked right into Lawrence's mind. 'Oh, I know all about the Silent scene,' she said once more and laughed.

Lawrence, playing his part, smiled at her and replied, 'You do?'

Amy looked deep into his brown eyes, and as she winked at him she whispered, 'Yes, I do.'

Lawrence laughed as he looked back at all the people standing inside the Deviants' carriage; they were all drinking, laughing and carrying on. He thought to himself, 'They seem to me to be more dead than alive; I wonder what they do when the Film Train stops?'

Mr Euromaniac, as if from nowhere, suddenly appeared again. Apparently, he had managed to get a sexy model in the Deviants' compartment to sign a European agreement form. The sexy model he said would dance on his screen for a whole year for nothing. When the Euromaniac spotted the Silent Face man talking to the sexy woman in the white braces and leather trousers at the end of the second carriage, he ran over to speak to him. He was very excited indeed, 'She is going to do it for me, Silent Face. I

will set it up right away, and send the pictures of her all over Europe. I've told her that she will be a big star.'

Mr Euromaniac stopped speaking when he noticed four Chic City Women standing behind Lawrence. The women, all dressed in fashionable bondage, stared back at him. In the Silent scene they say Chic City Women are only into power, bank accounts, and greenbacks. They are clever, cautious and sometimes kind. They can usually get their hands on just about anything. They use fashion as a weapon, and sex as a threat. The Chic City Women noticed the Euromaniac, and they all smiled at each other as if they understood what he was up to. Some of the passengers inside the Deviants' carriage at this point started heading towards carriage number three.

Just then a man, in a latex corset and red lipstick, shouted, 'Bring the carry-out through, James!'

The Euromaniac stopped dancing about, and he watched the men disappear. In a sad voice, he muttered to himself, 'Why are they leaving the Deviants' carriage.'

Lawrence knew the Euromaniac to be far out sexually, and he wondered what he would say to the Chic City Women. Just at that moment the bare-chested waiter appeared on the scene again, and he asked the Chic City Women, in a rough Scottish accent, 'Would you like some more drinks, ladies?'

They all agreed to more champagne and, as he filled their glasses up, they all stared at the roof of the Film Train. Then for some reason they all turned and stared at this Silent Face hero standing beside them.

Once they were topped-up the Chic City Women started talking to each other again about fashion stores in town, men who had disappointed them, nightclubs, famous people, and apartments in the city now up for sale.

It soon became apparent that they had all been on the Film Train before. In fact, they had worked on it last year. Apparently, the Chic City Women knew the man who organised the Deviants' carriage.

Mr Euromaniac wasted no time, he approached the Chic City Women and said, 'Are you into sleaze, ladies?' Then he acted like a man caught between two worlds: a world of conditions, and a world of information. His thin body stood to attention, as he said, 'You can become famous overnight, you know. All you have to do is take your clothes off.'

The Chic City women all laughed. Feeling a little embarrassed the Euromaniac hit back, 'There's money in it you know - all you have to do is let me film you. You will appear on laptops and screens all over Europe, and money will be sent to you.'

The bare-chested waiter looked at the Silent Face man beside him and, after giving Mr Euromaniac a free can of beer for entertaining the ladies, he laughed to himself and said, 'The Euromaniac is right, there is no controversy in Europe when it comes to beautiful women.'

Mr Euromaniac repeated, 'No, none, there is no controversy in Europe when it comes to beautiful women.'

The bare-chested waiter laughed and he winked at the Chic City Women, then he pulled his trolley of drinks along towards the next carriage.

The Euromaniac became animated and shouted after him, 'I will send you some interesting material if you want to your computer. What's your E-mail address?'

The bare-chested waiter had served many people on the Film Train, but he had never come across anyone quite like Mr Euromaniac before. The waiter laughed as he looked back at the strange man. In a quiet voice, he said to himself, 'I will give it to you later, Mr Euromaniac.'

Many Deviants in the second compartment had brought their own personal computers, and some of them had put them on their tables in the second compartment and were now using them. The majority, however, were just standing about chatting and drinking. Although, everyone knew Mr Euromaniac no one really spoke to him and, after the Chic City Woman had wandered away into carriage number three he went back to his seat and there he sat all

alone and played with his personal computer. And you know from the far end of the compartment you could almost hear him say, 'Now let's see what is happening in Brussels. I wonder if there are any beautiful girls out there who want to speak to me?'

Lawrence smiled at the young lady on the floor. However, the sexy young thing with her hair tied up looked away and searched for someone else to contact through the World Wide Web.

At the end of the second carriage, someone had put on a film show. The small screen covered one section of the purple curtain, and after some technical problems had been solved lots of lovely gorgeous women appeared on it and started dancing about. Not long after the show had started someone told the Euromaniac about it, and he shut his laptop computer and raced up to the front of the little crowd that had gathered around the screen. Presently, a professional actress came on screen and introduced the proceedings: 'Beware, this is a fantasy world...'

At the front of the crowd, Mr Euromaniac whispered to himself, 'Yes, it certainly is,' and as his eyes went all funny inside his queer little dainty head, he kept muttering to himself, 'yes, this is good stuff, good stuff, good stuff.'

The professional voice on screen went on: 'I would like to introduce you to two of our top European dream girls: Laura and her friend Liza. Tonight they are going to perform - just for you.'Mr Euromaniac liked this and started to sing to himself, 'That's fine, that's fine, that's fine.'

Many people started to gather round the screen at the end of the second compartment, and as some of them cheered the poor little Euromaniac got pushed out of the way; however he soon got in to the rhythm of the crowd and was soon swaying with them. At times the Euromaniac punched the air in delight and shouted, 'Yes! Yes! Yes!'

Lawrence stood at the side of the crowd near the end of the Deviants' carriage and as he watched the crazy scene, he noticed many Gapers inside the small group gathered there. Gapers, in the Silent scene, are people who stare at an illusion for an awful long time.

Lawrence laughed at the scene, and after the film had finished he went over and said goodbye to Emily. When she smiled at him he looked back at the people in the second carriage for the last time; some were seated, some were standing, and some were just lying about. He noticed on the floor, at the end of the Deviants' carriage, a space between the doorway and the passageway, and as he looked down he heard a terrific noise. He stared for a moment or two and observed some sparks from the wheels of the old-fashioned electric train. They flew up alive into the carriage, then they died away.

Lawrence, after checking that the killer was not hiding in the toilet of the second compartment, braced himself for action: 'Well, I guess it's time to go into the final carriage of the Film Train, and find the man who killed my friend Hugh Jones, and bring him to justice.'

5 Crazy people

Through a window on the train door Lawrence stared at all the old-fashioned lightbulbs that were hanging down from the ceiling. The colourful lightbulbs seemed to be everywhere inside the third compartment. He could see from outside the carriage that all the windows inside the third compartment had been painted dark blue to resemble the night outside. His Silent Face gazed at the scene for some time, then just as the Film Train swayed he opened the old-fashioned door and entered the final carriage of the Film Train.

Lawrence stood for a moment and stared at the people inside the compartment. He reckoned there were about 100, or so, people inside the third carriage. On first impression he thought it looked like a huge abstract painting.

The first person he came across was a young lady. The young lady, a few years younger than him, was dressed up in shoddy fashionable clothes. Lawrence noticed that one of her eyes did not seem to sit in the centre of its socket. The eye seemed to float around as if lost in space, and this gave her appearance a comical look. In a smooth worldly tone she said, 'You'll be lucky.'

Lawrence wondered what she meant, and he replied, 'Yes, it's busy isn't it.' Then he quickly asked her, 'Have you seen a friend

of mine, he is wearing a black leather jacket, and his hair is dark brown and brushed forward in an untidy style over his eyes?'

The young lady, before she replied, puffed lazily on a cigarette, 'Listen, Silent Face, we are all crazy in here. Life means nothing to us - people less.'

She did not appear to be with anyone, and because he could not go forward at this point, for no one was moving out of the way, Lawrence smiled at her. Then he suddenly remembered another line from the film, Killer on the Midnight Train, and he kept the conversation going by saying, 'Yes, life is a riddle that unfolds itself into a puzzle as time mercifully goes by.'

The third carriage had no seats or tables in it, and the ceiling and the walls of the train were painted in way-out colours. Lawrence, wondering what it was all for, asked the young lady in a casual way, 'What's the theme of the third carriage, then?'

The young lady retorted, 'You mean you haven't guessed.'

Lawrence thought about saying, 'Painters from another Universe,' but he just smiled and said, 'No idea.'

The young lady said in a menacing voice, 'Crazy people,' then she hid her feelings behind a mad smile.

Lawrence felt that she was not the type to stand on ceremony, and he quickly asked her name.

The young lady looked away and uttered, 'Cora.'

He noticed that Cora seemed to read his Silent Face quite well, and she seemed to know all about the Silent scene.

Cora said that she had met Silent Faces before, and after asking Lawrence what sort of time he had in the other carriages, she told him what she did for a living: 'I paint big fat naked ladies.'

'What!' laughed Lawrence, and to release the tension he stretched his hands out to exaggerate their form, 'You mean big fat ladies.'

Cora smiled before delivering another fantastic image, 'Yes, big fat naked ladies.'

Lawrence thought it wonderful and he asked her if all the people in the carriage were crazy painters. The young artist puffed on her cigarette, thought for a moment, then answered him, 'No.

In fact, I may be the only one,' and just before she spoke again a man in a dark suit bumped into her, and he shouted into her ear, 'Any booze!' The man who had just bumped into her seemed to upset her train of thoughts, and Cora cried out, 'Watch where you're going,' and she pushed him away.

Lawrence stared at the painted dark blue window, on the right hand side, of the old-fashioned train, and he wondered what all those Crazy people, in the Crazy compartment did for a living.

He told himself: 'They say in the Silent scene that we need crazy people to come in and out of our lives; for they seem to take away all our worries and anxieties.' And after a moment or two he smiled and uttered to himself, 'Yes, crazy people seem to take us away from ourselves with their wild actions. In a strange way, they help us deal with the rough and tumble world that has only logic to guide it.'

Lawrence chatted to the crazy painter about art, and sometimes Cora would point to one of the painted windows inside the third compartment of the Film Train and say, 'It's the dark images out there that hold the clue to life, Silent Face, not the ones in here inside the Film Train.'

A group of artist planned to act as objects all the way to London on the Film Train. Some of the crazy people in the third compartment had become trees, and some of them had become lightbulbs, some of them were even imitating animals. Some others had become abstract thoughts like: happiness and anger, and went about the carriage making sounds, portraying their abstract thoughts in emotions. Some of the Crazy people identified with old film stars, who had played characters who had empathised with feelings like: hate, love, anger, and fear. Many of the crazy people were dressed up like Film stars of the past. It was as if something, or someone, had taken over their characters just for the day. Sometimes the Crazy people in the third compartment of the Film Train would ask each other, 'Who are you? What are you meant to be?' and then they would laugh at each other.

Someone walked by Lawrence just then and shouted at Cora, 'Well, if it is not the one-eyed monster who paints big fat ladies,' and the man made a mad face at the painter.

Lawrence at times could hardly take it all in: 'Crazy People act as if nothing exists outside this world, and only fun inside the Film Train can help them understand it. Everything in life for them seems to be out of order, and in some strange way laid back. I have even heard it said in the Silent scene that Crazy people do anything just to be different.'

However, it was plain to see that the majority of Crazy people were just drinking and talking to each other, the way normal folk do when they take a Film Train ride. Just at that moment, Lawrence seemed to grasp the theme of the third compartment, and it all seemed great fun: for you had to guess what it was that made up a crazy world, and then act upon it inside the crazy compartment.

He laughed until he heard an angry voice scream, 'I'll kill him. I'll kill him. I'll murder him. I'll cut his throat,' then a crazy man laughed before adding, 'That's if I find him.'

The Crazy people all seemed to like music, and they had hired a singer to sing for them. At the moment he was playing some weird music on an old-fashioned electric guitar. The Crazy people were all laughing at him. Lawrence said cheerio to Cora, and thankfully he managed to get by some of the creatures painted in tattoos. And as he moved along the third compartment he looked for the face of the killer in amongst the Crazy people.

Just then, a fight broke out and the singer stopped singing and the Crazy people made space for the two young men in white shirts to fight. Lawrence was not sure if they were acting and using props: for they were going at it hammer and tongs. One man smashed a bottle over the other man's head, then the other man smashed a bottle over his head. For the sake of sanity, Lawrence told himself they were just acting: 'They must be using fake bottles like they used to do in the movies,' but he could not be sure.

At that moment, a wild man with long hair dressed up like a pirate, on the Film Train, shouted, 'Right drink up lads we want to

finish the booze before we get to London!' and he started handing out bottles of beer to everyone.

Not faraway a crowd of people started dancing about behind the fighters. They started chanting tribal lyrics. Then some Crazy people started pouring drinks over each other, and soon the whole compartment looked like a mad New Year's party.

Lawrence's robe changed colour many times at this point, as he moved slowly along the wall trying to avoid the crazy people. Thankfully, as the crowd in the carriage went back and forward in a crazy dance, he avoided the melee. The Crazy people, after a time, stopped throwing drinks over each other and things seemed to settle down. The men, as it turned out, who had been fighting were actually friends, and after a time they hugged, and started kissing each other.

Just then a tentative voice said to Lawrence, 'They really are the best of friends, you know, Silent Face.'

Lawrence looked at the man, dressed in the smart pinstripe suit. The man looked to be about sixty years old, and he seemed an ordinary everyday type of bloke, totally out of place in the crazy compartment. The man had a worried look on his red well-bred face. He said in a sardonic tone, 'I was told that they were going to show films nonstop on the Film Train, until we got to London,' then he laughed, as if this sort of thing happened to him in life, 'I love the old films and I go on all the trips - but not like this.'

Lawrence smiled and said, 'It is something else, isn't it.'

'Stuart McCourty is my name,' said the man and he flicked his eyebrows up, indicating that he had seen the brawl on the Film Train. In a smooth wry voice, Stuart added, 'But it's my first and my last time on the Film Train - that's for sure,' and he laughed again.

Lawrence asked him, 'Have you been all over the Film Train?

Stuart answered, 'Oh yes,' and as he looked over his shoulder, he added, 'I think I will go back to the second compartment, even though it's full of queers and funny folk - it's much safer.'

Apparently, an opera friend had told Stuart about the trip. Looking at the absurd man dressed up as a schoolboy standing next to him, he said, 'He suggested to me that the next time I go to London to see him I should travel on the Film Train - so I booked my ticket and hear I am.' Then after a pause, he added, 'But between you and me, Silent Face, I'll just be glad to get to London in one piece.'

Lawrence quickly asked him, 'Have you seen a man in a black leather jacket, with dark brown hair brushed forward over his eyes?'

Stuart laughed and said, 'Hundreds of them.' Then he nodded in the direction of the two men in the middle of the carriage; for they had just started fighting again. 'Yes, time to go, Silent Face,' said Stuart who coughed before moving back towards carriage number two.

Lawrence watched him walk away, and he too wanted to leave the compartment, 'But I can't leave now. No, I can't go back till I have found the man in the black leather jacket who killed my Silent Face friend Hugh Jones.'

Lawrence after this came upon a man with a lopsided face. The man with the lopsided face seeing a Silent Face man in the Crazy compartment turned towards his friend and spoke to him. His friend, a sensible stocky chap, listened to him attentively. While speaking the man with the lopsided face drew his hand across his lopsided face, as if to reassure himself his face was still there. And as he spoke he stared at his friend with mad eyes. He asked him short definite questions: 'What do Silent Faces do in the Silent scene?' Do they like the Film Train? Where do they hang out? Why do they dress the way they do?'

The questions came so fast that the friend of the man with the lopsided face had hardly any time to answer them. When a pause did eventually come, the man with the lopsided face stared at his friend, as if waiting for the devil to jump out of his mouth - so that he could wallop it - such was the expression on his lopsided face.

The man with the lopsided face listened carefully and when he heard the sound of polite acceptable words come forth from his friend's mouth, he grunted, 'That's all right, then.'

The man with the lopsided face then asked another question, before he screwed up his face, and waited for an answer. Lawrence thought the man with the lopsided face funny: 'I think he sees half the world mad, and half the world sane - so that's why he challenges one half, and accepts the other.'

After a few seconds, Lawrence walked over to him and said, 'Have you come across a man in a black leather jacket, with dirty dark brown hair brushed forward over his eyes, on the Film Train?'

The man with the lopsided Face looked at the Silent Face man in front of him. Then he said in a loud aggressive voice, 'What did you say!'

Lawrence felt like laughing, but he steadied himself and declared, 'He is a man of about my height; he is wearing a leather jacket. His hair is brown and brushed forward over his eyes.'

'No!' cried the man with the lopsided face, and then he asked aggressively, 'What do you want?'

Lawrence told him in a plain voice, 'The man I am looking for has just killed my friend!'

The man with the lopsided face looked at his friend, the sensible chap, then he looked back at the Silent Face man in front of him. Suddenly, he yelled, 'That's a good one, Silent Face, ha, ha, ha.'

Lawrence, as the man with the lopsided face stared at him, looked at some of the people in the Crazy compartment, and he searched every face around him on the Film Train. Then he moved off towards the middle of the carriage.

A man, with short untidy grey hair, aged around fifty, standing there all alone in the middle of the carriage looked at Lawrence. He did not appear to be looking for anyone. He seemed to be somewhere else. The man looked odd. His expression was kind and sad, at the same time: a strange combination. Lawrence asked him in a gentle voice, 'Are you enjoying the Film Train, sir?'

The man turned round and looked at the Silent Face man, and after a quick look here and there at some Crazy people going by him, he said slowly, 'Yes,' and as his eyes sparkled, he proudly told Lawrence, 'I'm an inventor.'

Lawrence smiled at the inventor, for he thought him quaint: he looked so peculiar in his old-fashioned dark blue check suit, 'What do you invent, sir?'

The man, on hearing an ordinary everyday question, seemed to get excited, and he replied quickly, 'Anything,' then he paused, before adding, 'though no one seems to want anything anymore these days.'

Lawrence wondered about this, and he was just about to ask the inventor if he had come across a man in a black leather jacket when he heard the inventor man say to him, 'I'm not all there, you know.'

'Oh,' said Lawrence and smiled at him.

The inventor, as the Film Train went under a bridge and into a tunnel, watched Lawrence's robe switch colour, and when they came out of the tunnel, he stared at it. Then he added, 'I thought about that idea before it came out, you know.'

Lawrence smiled at him and said, 'Well, there are plenty of other things I'm sure you can invent.'

The inventor nodded, but he seemed to lose concentration. He said in a sad voice, 'I sometimes get lonely; I guess that's why I come on the Film Train, every year.'

This man may have been rejected by society, but Lawrence saw something good in this man's eyes, and he believed that given some encouragement. and some money, he would come up with the goods. The inventor looked at Lawrence's Silent Face, then he whispered, 'If I invent something, before we get to London, will you tell all your friends about it in the Silent scene.'

Lawrence smiled and said, 'So you have heard about the Silent scene, then.'

The inventor replied, in a happy voice, 'Oh, yes.'

Lawrence wanted to ask him some more questions. However, the inventor looked left then right. He seemed to be in a hurry to

say something, 'Listen, Silent Face, I have just unravelled how to change musical notes into musical words,' and he chuckled to himself. 'All I need is a good tune - then I'll go down in history.'

The inventor looked here and there again at some of the faces inside the third compartment of the Film Train, then he brought out a small silver tube and he put it to his mouth. Lawrence listened to the tune and, after a few seconds the inventor stopped whistling, he pressed a tiny red button on the side of the small silver tube. And as he waited for something to happen the inventor's eyes sparkled. In a quiet voice he said, 'Listen, Silent Face.'

Suddenly, words came out of the tiny speaker of the silver tube: 'Night and day may fade but love will stay,' and then some notes flashed on the side of the silver tube.

Lawrence loved music and he said that's brilliant, then he shook the hand of the inventor, 'You see you're going to be famous after all.'

The inventor's face came alive, as if the man in front of him had just offered to sponsor him for the rest of his life. He quickly went on, 'And if you press this button here twice, you can change the words into Italian. And if you press it three times here you can change the words into French, and four times here for Arabic, and so on...'

Lawrence soon got the idea and wondered if it had been done before, but he had never heard about it. However, when he looked at the man he felt sorry for him; for he could see that sophisticated people, especially those from the city, would ignore him because of his appearance. His Silent Face, for a time, smiled at the man in front of him, who had been cast aside by society. Lawrence thought to himself, 'Just shows you what they say is true: never put your trust in any society that does not help its citizen.'

Lawrence seemed to lose himself for a moment in thought as he listened to the same song being sung in different languages. Then he spoke to the inventor, and he asked him many questions about his invention. In fact, if truth be told Lawrence nearly forgot all about the killer on the Film Train.

The Crazy people had apparently all got to know each other through a magazine, and the magazine had organised a trip for their crazy readers. This year's excursion was billed as: A Wonderful Crazy Night Out On The Film Train.

A young Chinese girl wearing a colourful tee shirt started dancing in front of Lawrence. She jumped up and down and began singing the lyrics to the old rock and roll classic song that was being played by the guitarist, in the crazy carriage. Then she winked at his Silent Face before going off to join her friends.

Just then, a few Kleptos appeared in the third carriage of the Film Train. They had apparently been in carriage two and, as they entered the third carriage, they watched everything around them. The Kleptos then went to work; they dipped the Crazy Peoples' pockets and stole their drinks that were lying around here and there in the Crazy compartment.

They say in the Silent scene Kleptos will steal anything. Seeing the Silent Face man stare at them, some of the Kleptos came over and introduced themselves. One Klepto said, 'Well, well, well, Mr Silent Face, fancy meeting you here!'

Another Klepto asked, 'What are you doing in the Crazy carriage of the Film Train, Silent Face - looking for luv?'

They say in the Silent scene the best way to deal with thieves is to ignore them. A Klepto, a prissy bald young man with an affected sweet made up voice, purred, 'Well, hello Silent Face, having a good time, then,' and he slowly threw a punch at him and playfully hit Lawrence's chin.

Lawrence replied with a smile, 'Yes, it has been very interesting, and it's not over yet.'

'Are you on your own?' asked the bald prissy Klepto.

Lawrence smiled and joked, 'You are never alone in the Silent scene.'

As everyone laughed, Lawrence thought it a good opportunity to ask the young bald man about the man who had killed his bald friend Hugh Jones, 'Have you seen a man with dark hair brushed forward over his eyes; he has got a black leather jacket on?'

The bald Klepto thought for a moment, then he said, ‘Oh, I can never remember who I steal things from.’

The second Klepto, a tall thin man with a pointed face, dressed up in a smart suit, at that moment stuck his head in, and as he made a daft face he introduced himself, ‘Queen Bee, they call me.’

Lawrence laughed, and said, ‘Do they really.’

In a terrible hurry, someone bumped into Queen Bee, and the queer man spilt a cold drink all down Lawrence’s robe. Queen Bee stared at the man, who had knocked the drink over Lawrence's robe, then he said, ‘I wonder what colour the robe will change to now,’ and everyone laughed.

The third Klepto looked at the Silent Face man standing in the middle of the Kleptos. Lawrence for a moment thought him to be a killer, for his face looked full of sin and mayhem, and he did not say anything to him. Lawrence looked into the eyes of the baldheaded Klepto and asked him again if he had seen a man in a black leather jacket.

The man cleverly replied, ‘Maybe I have, Silent Face, maybe I haven’t.’

The Kleptos did not stay very long; for they wanted to roam around and see what they could pick up before the Film Train got to London. ‘See you later, Silent Face,’ said Queen Bee, before he danced away following the other Kleptos.

When the Kleptos had gone, Lawrence searched everywhere for the face of the killer in the Film Train. Just then, a man dressed up in a zany suit walked over and said to Lawrence, in a friendly Irish voice, ‘Never miss the Film Train, I come every year.’ Then he lowered his voice and said, ‘Kevin Kane,’ and shook Lawrence’s hand.

Apparently, the man had come over to Britain from Ireland twenty years ago. He had refined his voice so much that he sounded like a professional personality. The man in the zany suit said in a relaxed tone, ‘Ah, I’m glad to see that there are still a lot of filmgoers around, you know.’

Lawrence nodded, then he asked him, 'Where do they all come from?'

The man from Ireland smiled, then repeated in an elevated tone, 'Ah where do they all come from, indeed?' and he opened his eyes wide as if to wonder.

Lawrence felt that the man in the zany suit understood the secrets of the old era, and he would have liked to have talked with him more on the subject. However, as he looked closely at the red sequence running through his zany suit, he asked him, 'Have you see a man in a black leather jacket, with dark brown hair brushed forward over his eyes?'

The Irishman nodded and winked before answering, 'What's it worth?'

Lawrence knew the killer was not faraway now, and he relaxed and played the man at his own game, 'Name your price?'

The man in the zany suit rubbed his hands together, then he said robustly, 'Free booze all the way to London town,' and he smiled a triumphant smile.

The Film Train seemed to pick up speed just then, and the man in the zany suit changed the subject, 'Ah, tis a pity the train is not going back in time to the old era when films were all the rage.'

Presently, the man in the zany suit moved away from Lawrence and talked to a serious looking man who had on dark glasses. Lawrence looked down the corridor, and he knew that among the fifty or so standing there, in the third compartment of the Film Train, the killer must be one of them.

Suddenly, the two actors started fighting once again. They may have been acting, but they were going for it hammer and tongs again. In the melee, Lawrence got pushed back and his head banged against the metal luggage rack that ran along the compartment. Feeling dizzy he knelt down and rubbed the back of his head many times, for it was sore. When he lifted his head up, lo and behold, he saw the killer's face. The man in the leather jacket, with the dark dirty brown hair brushed forward over his eyes, lay there in front of him looking up at the ceiling of the Film Train; his wrists had been cut.

Lawrence got up slowly and went over to look at him. He felt strange, as if he knew him from another world. He kept saying to himself, 'There lies the man who killed my friend Hugh Jones.'

The crazy people in the compartment probably thought he was one of them, and would lie there till the Film Train reached London. Lawrence thought he had better tell the guard about the man who had killed himself. He was just about to walk away when he suddenly thought, 'Hey wait a minute the blood is not running from his wrists.'

Out of the blue, the man in the leather jacket jumped up and tried to run through the crowd of crazy people. Lawrence grabbed him, and as he struggled with him he could here all the crazy people around him cheering. Suddenly, the man in the leather jacket broke free and as the crowd tried to make way for him, he ran over and grabbed a stool that someone had been sitting on, at the end of the crazy carriage. He picked the stool up and ran straight back towards Lawrence.

Lawrence watched the man in the black leather jacket, and just as he approached him he dived out of his way. The man burst through the Film Train window: for there was no glass in any of the windows of the third carriage, only Cellophane. No doubt the crazy people had done this as a prank. Someone must have thought it a good idea. The killer left a strange image in the window after he fell from the Film Train into the dark night. Suddenly a high-speed train thundered by the other way.

Some Crazy people started clapping, thinking it was a stunt. It was as if again something, or someone, had taken over their characters just for the day. Our Silent Face hero, as the wind and rain came into the Crazy compartment, rushed to the train window, and as he gazed along the tracks into the evil night, he knew the drama was over.

As Lawrence walked away back through the Film Train, he felt like the hero from the film: Killer on the Midnight Train. He said rather modestly to himself: 'Now, I can go back home and tell everyone in the Silent scene what happened to the man who killed my friend Hugh Jones.'

SILENT SCENE
Part One:THE POP FESTIVAL
[1] Time and Tide 1.09 * [2] Let's Dance the Night Away 3.42 * [3] One Day of Life 4.17 * [4] Sing 4.17 * [5] Time and Tide (part two) 2.30.
Part Two:SILENT FACES AT THE RACES
[6] Dj doh ray: Down at the club with Chris and Gary1.04 * [7] Shine On, Find Love 3.44 * [8] Dancing Loving 3.20.
Part Three:THE FILM FESTIVAL
[9] Bridge between Dreams 2.10* [10] Coming Together 5.18* [11] Relentless Struggle 4.32* [12] Film Train: everyone on board! 5.46* [13] Midnight Flowers 4.23* [14] Silent Storm 3.45.
Part 1 was recorded in Cava Studio, Glasgow, produced by Robin Rankin.
Parts 2 & 3 were recorded in Glasgow, produced by John A.Walker
© All songs were written by John A.Walker

Music from the novel:

https://walkerjohna.wordpress.com/about/

https://www.youtube.com/user/MrJohnawalker/videos